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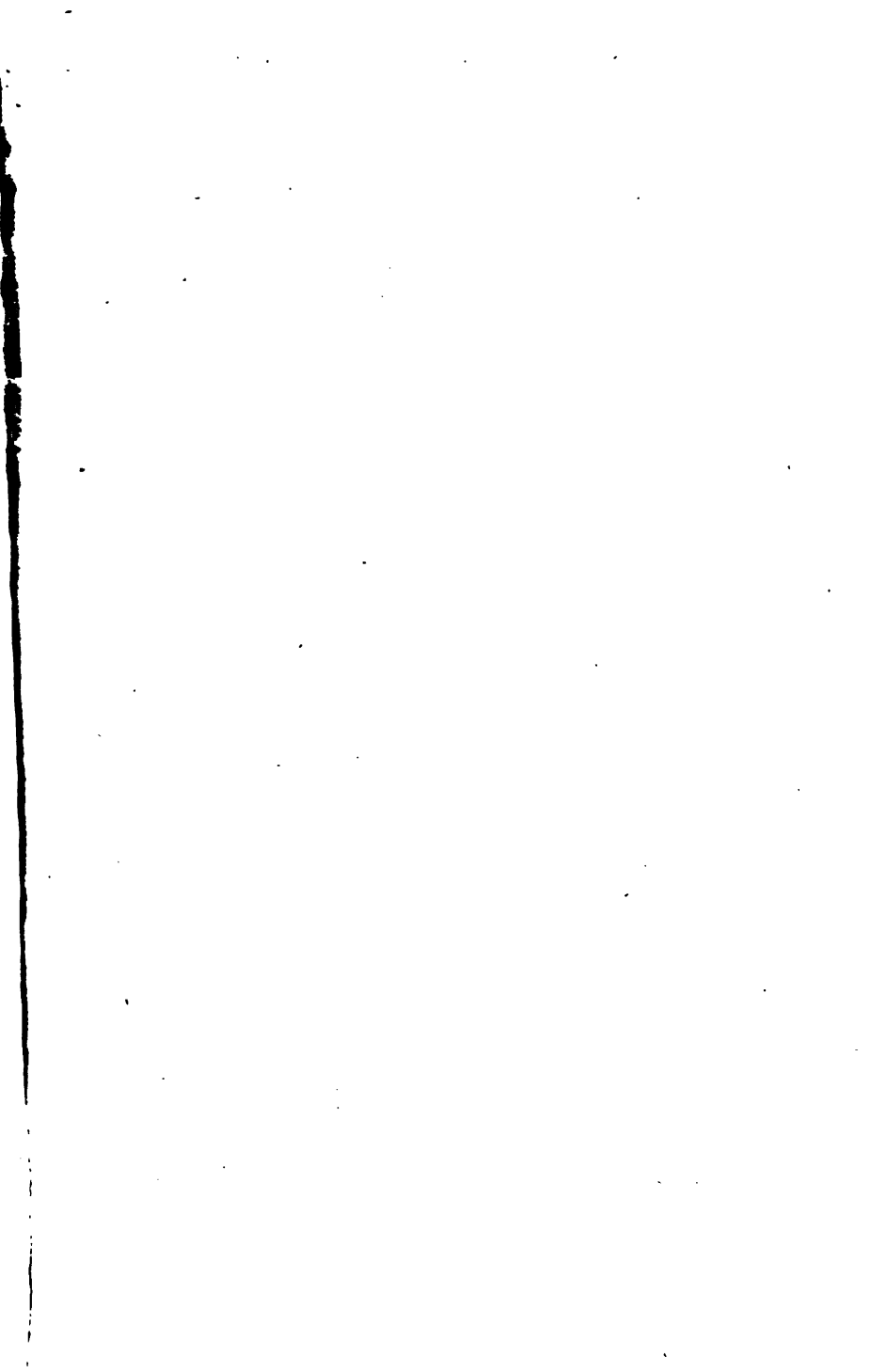
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THREE YEARS' SLAVERY

AMONG

THE PATAGONIANS:

AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CAPTIVITY,

BY A. GUINNARD,
MEMBER OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY OF FRANCE.

FROM THE THIRD FRENCH EDITION,
BY CHARLES S. CHELTNAM,
AUTHOR OF "A FIELD-FULL OF WONDERS," ETC.



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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

It is only doing justice to Monsieur Guinard, the writer of the following extremely interesting, and in many respects important, narrative of personal adventure and experience in a little-known region of the earth, to point out that the materials composing it were collected under circumstances of difficulty and peril, precluding the possibility of strictly methodical observation or scientific precision of detail, even had his qualifications for such work been greater than he modestly states them to have been. The

dates and distances given are mostly approximate only. It is the same with regard to the routes traced in his map as having been followed by him in company with the Indians of various tribes by whom he was held in slavery, as well as during his flight from captivity. "This labour," he says, in his address to the French readers of his narrative, "is not and could not be mathematically exact, for having been completely destitute, I had not the necessary instruments to determine the several positions of the places traversed by me." He took the greatest pains, however, to supply an excellent memory with data, and felt satisfied that the indications he has given are not far from the truth.

"It will doubtless be asked," he remarks, "for what reason the names in this map are written in an unknown

tongue? It is because, knowing the language of these nomads, I have acquired the certainty that not only have the names of their tribes been mangled hitherto, but that very few of them have been known at all. The orthography of these names differs from that generally adopted, because I think it not only necessary to make these denominations known, but also useful to preserve their true Indian pronunciation."

The most interesting and important point for consideration, however, is, that M. Guinnard claims to be the only European who has yet penetrated so far into the interior of Patagonia. His narrative is in every way extraordinary, and he admits that many persons were hardly able to believe in the possibility of his return after undergoing such trials as he relates, and that others went so far as absolutely to discredit

his statements. These statements, however, were believed in by many men of science, especially by the late M. Jomard, of the *Institut*, who gave him valuable advice in regard to the preparation of his book for publication, and would have practically assisted him to that end, had his life fortunately been spared:

For my own part, I think the internal evidence furnished by M. Guinnard's volume sufficient to establish the *bona fides* of the writer, and it is this conviction that has determined me to reproduce his narrative in English. I have scrupulously refrained from making alterations of any sort, even preferring to leave the measurements in French, rather than to interfere with the literal exactness of the statements made on the author's own responsibility.

I will only add, that M. Guinnard's

narrative has nothing in common with the numerous sensational travellers' tales told of Patagonia and the Patagonians; I have little doubt of its being found to surpass them all in thrilling interest, as it unquestionably surpasses all previously published accounts, in the novelty and value of the information it conveys regarding a race of the fiercest and most revolting savages in existence.

HAMMERSMITH,

March 21, 1871.



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THREE YEARS' SLAVERY

AMONG

THE PATAGONIANS.

CHAPTER I.

HOW IT WAS THAT I STARTED FOR MONTE
VIDEO, AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE I UNDER-
TOOK THE VOYAGE.

IN 1855, I was but three-and-twenty years of age. I had very little experience, but I had some ambition, and, above all, I was possessed by an ardent love of travel. From my earliest infancy I had felt myself electrified by the recital of the travels of my maternal ancestor, Ulliac de Kvallant, a

naval officer, who, at twenty-two, had three times made the voyage to the East Indies, and whom fortune had deigned to favour with one of her most gracious smiles. At a later period, reading developed in me this passion still more powerfully. I had such faith in my success abroad, that, seeing myself without a future to my taste, I suddenly took the fatal resolution to expatriate myself for several years, intending to employ them as usefully as possible to the equal profit of my memory and purse. I thought of the happiness I should feel, if it were permitted me to put an end to the misfortunes which weighed down my family, and this idea alone sufficed to console me for the painful separation I was inflicting on myself.

I did not impart my resolution to my relatives until a few days only before my departure. It was a sad surprise to them; but all the efforts they made to turn me

from my purpose were unavailing. It was thus, that, after receiving the visit of my beloved brother, who had come to bid me farewell, and to bring me the last greetings of all my relatives, I embarked at Havre, in the month of August, 1855, for Monte Video.

The weather was magnificent when we set sail, but changed completely during the following night, and for a fortnight we remained at the mercy of the furious waves of the Channel, in spite of all efforts that were made to enter the Atlantic Ocean. At length, on the sixteenth day, the sea became calm, and we began to make good way.

The further we went, the more splendid the weather appeared to become, and we reached the embouchure of the Plata without encountering a single danger. We were not, however, to arrive at the end of the voyage without my experiencing some of the horrors to which sailors are exposed, for

on entering the Plata we were met by one of the most frightful tempests imaginable, and thrown upon the English Bank, where we ran the greatest risk of perishing. We owed our escape solely to the great strength of the ship, which, fortunately, was a new one, and to the coolness of our able captain, who succeeded in reanimating the energy of his crew, when, for a moment, it had become paralyzed by fear.

As soon as the danger was passed, and calm restored on board, I heard the crew once more talking together of their plans for amusing themselves on shore. I never ceased questioning them concerning Monte Video, where so many others before me had been happy enough to see their desires realized; to the wishes of all sorts which I had formed was added a feverish impatience to set foot on the American soil, which I had been told was so wonderful.

But I had scarcely arrived, before I was

seized with a presentiment of ill augury, when heavy, rolling clouds of smoke met my sight, and the first sounds that fell upon my ears at the portals of the New World were those of a lively fusillade, mixed with the booming of cannon.

I had arrived just in time to witness one of the insurrections so frequent in the Republics of La Plata. I went on shore the next day, and in spite of the dissentient state of the country, felt happy to make acquaintance with a people so new to me, whose opinions at once awakened my completest sympathy.

Not without difficulty, I succeeded in gaining admission to an hotel of modest appearance, the first I came upon, the door of which was strongly barricaded on the inside. Though the voyage had been one of the best, I felt in great need of repose; but I found it impossible to sleep, for the shouts of the populace and the firing that were going on.

The following day I was up at dawn, moved by an ardent desire to explore the city, which I was bent on doing in spite of the charitably hostile exclamations of mine host, who feared to lose a lodger; but quickly reassured, as soon as he learned that I intended to leave all my baggage as security for my return, he admitted and explained to me how little danger there really was in walking about the streets in the daytime. He told the truth; for, in spite of the cries and musketry-firing, the greater part of the inhabitants came into the streets to purchase provisions. In a short space of time, I passed through the principal streets, filled with soldiers—almost all of them negroes—in rags, and barefooted, looking like a horde of robbers, and appearing much more intent on avoiding the blows to which they are usually exposed, than on submitting themselves to any sort of discipline; to which state of things may be attributed the greater part of

the crimes and disorders committed in these outbreaks.

In these distant countries, few men are killed in fair fighting; for the struggles are wholly contemptible. Many victims of revenge fall, however; the darkness of the streets—for the most part unlighted—apparently facilitating this result. It is by no means rare, even in times of peace, to hear the groans of some unfortunate late wayfarer who has neglected to place himself under the guardianship of *Los serenos*, or guardians of the night, who, for a payment of money, unauthorized, it need hardly be said, would have passed him safely from beat to beat to his domicile. These watchmen carry a lanthorn in the left hand, and a spear in the right, their armament being completed with a sword. Their duty is to guard the safety of the inhabitants, and to call through the streets the hours and the state of the weather; but the sentiment of duty is so much a secondary

consideration with them, that they frequently refuse to escort *los ciudadanos*—the citizens—who do not offer them money. Besides this, many of them push their love of property to such an extent as not to shrink from despoiling those whom they accompany gratuitously.

After staying for a month and a half at Monte Video, during which time I visited all the environs, the generally bad state of affairs showing me that I could neither profitably employ my time there, nor go by land either to Assumption or Brazil, I determined to go to Buenos Ayres, and reached there in one night by steamer. This city also I found distracted by an intestine war, the end of which it was impossible to foresee; and I was thus, as at Monte Video, prevented from using my letters of introduction.

The lives of foreigners there were very insecure, and I again saw myself under the necessity of moving elsewhere. At first I

thought of going to Rosario, the general meeting-place of Europeans ; but not wishing to run the risk of afterwards regretting having acted too precipitately, I employed every means I could devise for establishing relations with the traders. But all my attempts were fruitless, and I returned to my first idea of betaking myself to Rosario after exploring all the Argentine Provinces.

We were already in the month of February, 1856. Winter beginning in May, I had but two months before me to fix on my destination. After having visited the Argentine Confederation to the South, Carmen on the Rio Negro, Fort Argentine and White Bay, I wandered through all the districts of Buenos Ayres to the source of the Rio Quéquène, a watercourse rarely traced and still more rarely laid down in the maps. Having also vainly traversed Tendil, Azul, Bragado-Grande, Bragado-Chico, Múrita, even to the smallest villages and farms, connecting these

divers populations, which are too far removed from one another to form a frontier, properly so called.

Seeing that it was in vain for me to hope to meet with better chances on this soil, little trodden as it is by Europeans, I determined to put my first project into execution. To this end, I returned to Quéquène-Grande for the purpose of providing myself with the provisions requisite for such a journey, receiving on my way the hospitality of the Estancieros, or farmers devoted mainly to cattle-rearing and trading.

On my return to Quéquène, I met an Italian named Pedritto, like myself misled into visiting this useless part of the country. We were not long in striking up an acquaintance; we discovered in the course of conversation that we had arrived in America only a few days apart, both actuated by the desire to form a suitable position, and both led—looking at the difficulties we

had met with from the time of our landing—to form the same project, of going to Rosario. We at once agreed to join company in the journey, made the more difficult by our ignorance of the Spanish language, and our inability to ride; these disqualifications, by depriving us of the use of horses and guides, compelled us to travel on foot. We joined our pecuniary resources, and purchased arms and munitions sufficient to last us a month: we each carried five livres of gunpowder, fifteen livres of lead, some eatables, and a few spare articles of dress.

We were not ignorant of the numberless difficulties and dangers by which we might be assailed, but having determined to brave all, we only took the precaution to purchase a compass and a sun-dial, and to make out a plan of our intended route on which each day's journey was laid down; this done, we started with that confidence with which resolution and hope inspire youth.

It was on the 18th of May, 1856, that we first set foot on the soil of the Pampas, in the direction of the West, which we intended to follow only so far as the Sierra Ventana.

But, as I have already said, this period coincides with winter in these regions, making us fear more bad than good weather.

On the day after the commencement of our journey, indeed, a torrent-like rain, augmented by a violent and icy wind whistling from the depths of Patagonia, cruelly assailed us. This bad weather continued for four mortal days, during which we were compelled to rest stretched upon the wet ground, without being able to hunt or to light a fire. We had the greatest difficulty to keep our arms uninjured, on which our existence depended during the long course of the journey of which we were only at the outset, and which already had shown itself so painful and dangerous.

It was not until the evening of the fourth

day that the rain ceased, and was followed by a ray of sunshine, which reanimated our courage and enabled us to dry our clothes. During the few hours we rested we were able to admire the immense plains of thick green grass spread beneath our eyes to the boundless horizon, and from which the setting sun called forth the full beauty.

Before the return of night we had put on our perfectly-dried clothes, and taken advantage of the opportunity which the hunting of viscachas* gave us of replenishing our store of provisions, for we had that day finished the small quantity of rain-soaked bread that remained to us. Our strength being restored and our moral condition fortified, we consulted our plan of route and our compass, making for the south-east, in the firm conviction that we were on the right course for Rosario. Our march became more and more difficult, ob-

* Note A.

structed as it was by a compact mass of high grass, compelling us to raise our knees in an extremely fatiguing manner. Besides this, the soddened earth injured and stretched our shoes to such a degree that we were frequently threatened with the loss of them—a loss which actually occurred on the following night, during the most complete obscurity, while we were struggling in a muddy hollow, from which we had the greatest trouble in the world to extricate ourselves. As it had been impossible for us to procure a change of shoes before our departure from Quéquène-Grande, we were now reduced to travel with bare feet over ground often bristling with sharp stones or thorns, and with the cold becoming more and more intense.

Towards the morning of the fifth day, in spite of numerous difficulties which seemed purposely to oppose our march, we had none the less traversed a very considerable space of ground. During the following evening we

came upon a narrow and deep river, buried between nearly perpendicular banks. How to cross this river, we had to think a good deal. To descend to the edge of the stream was a real labour, so steep was the bank; the rest of the day was spent in searching for a crossing to the opposite side. When at length we found one, we were so tired out as to prefer putting off the passage until the next day, especially as the side which we were on appeared to promise us shelter from the icy wind which blew unceasingly. To protect ourselves as completely as we could from the cold and damp of the atmosphere, we hit on the plan of digging out the side of the steep river-bank with our knives, so as to form a cavern. This work finished, we carried luxury to the extent of lighting in the interior a pile of brushwood to dry the walls; and after having done honour to an excellent supper, composed of a leg of gama, the produce of our hunting, we installed our-

selves inside of our still warm habitation, which seemed to promise our fatigued bodies a night of delicious repose.

But, alas! one never thinks of everything. We had been too much absorbed in the work of making ourselves comfortable, to pay any attention to the rising of the river, swollen by the rain. Hardly had we closed an eyelid, than our cave was suddenly invaded by the boiling and rapid stream, that nearly made of it our tomb. Being, most fortunately, not yet quite asleep, I had time to awaken my companion, to snatch up our arms, and fly.

But to escape was not an easy thing for two men thus surprised by danger at the moment of their first sleep. We had to find a way through the whirling waters and darkness, and to use our knives as steps in climbing a high bank, the foot of which was undermined by the action of the water, and which threatened to crumble under us at

every hasty movement we made. In spite of all our coolness, Providence must have come to our assistance, for, great as the peril was, we had the happiness of reaching safe and sound the summit of the cliff, furnished with all our arms. We had only to deplore the loss of part of our stores, of our powder, and of the spare small things, which became under our eyes the prey of the impetuous torrent. This night, begun under such dispiriting auspices, ended, however, in profound sleep, and the next day, on awaking, there remained of the danger passed nothing but a remembrance, which would have served rather to encourage than to depress us, if we had not been obliged to wait during two long days of privation and hunger, until the subsidence of the waters allowed us to cross the river.

Not till the third day did we attempt the passage, after having each made a package of his effects, which we placed on our heads.

We swam with one hand, while with the other we held our rifles and revolvers above the water; but it was not an easy thing to do. The current was extremely strong, and carried us into a whirlpool, in which we might both have been drowned; and by the time we reached the opposite bank, we were both nearly exhausted. We were, however, so fortunate as to be able to make a good fire with roots, which invigorated our limbs and dried our clothing and arms, which we looked to with the greatest care.

If, on the one hand, these grievous experiences augmented our confidence in our strength and in our contempt of danger, on the other it delayed our progress. Moreover, our feet, already bleeding, suffered the more cruelly from our having no means of protecting them either against the roughness of the ground, or against the influence of the frost. Towards the middle of the day, however, having had the good fortune to kill a

she gama,* which we roasted, our spirits rose with our repast, and rendered it delicious. Of the skin of this animal we attempted to make sandals, but this fragile covering for the feet, besides being insufficient to protect them from the stones and thorns, was speedily torn. It did not even serve to diminish the effect of the intense cold on our open wounds. Being thus rendered incapable of quickening our pace, we resolved on walking day and night, only according to the imperative requirements of sleep and hunger as much time as was strictly necessary, with the view of limiting, as far as possible, the duration of our journey.

But, in spite of this economical arrangement, our provisions were speedily exhausted, without the possibility of our being able to replace them, for we had entered upon *uno campo*, or kind of pampas, to the south-west of some mountains linked with

* Note B.

the Sierra Ventana by a stretch of rough calcareous land, which offered to the eager eyes of us poor hungry travellers no trace of animals or of vegetation.

The entire day slowly passed without our discovering the smallest atom of anything with which to appease our hunger and thirst. Evening came, and being unable to find any sort of shelter, we were obliged to lie down upon the stony and frost-covered ground. To the frightful torture of hunger which we felt, succeeded the most complete inertia. Thank God, however, the burning fever from which we suffered plunged us into a leaden sleep, during which our aching and exhausted limbs regained some portion of their lost strength. On waking, we continued our painful pilgrimage over plains of the nature of saltpetre, and covered with numerous shallow salt-pools, the loathsome waters—tasting like copper—resting on beds of black and nauseating mud, in which at times

animals disappeared, drawn thither by thirst, and betrayed by the limpidity of the water.

These pools were tenanted by myriads of flamingoes with long necks, thin, tailless bodies, and tall legs, the bright poppy-red of their wings standing out forcibly from the irreproachable whiteness of their other feathers. At our approach we saw them fly away simultaneously, their necks outstretched, their lank legs joined behind them in the form of a rudder, flying silently and with the lightness and swiftness of an arrow, of which they had all the appearance. I tried to shoot some of them, but my gun hung fire, and I could not succeed.

Although our feet were deeply excoriated and full of thorns, the agonies of hunger had plunged us into such a state of delirious excitement, that we scarcely heeded the painful contact of the frozen ground. Our bowels were attacked by sufferings a thousand times more horrible than death.

In the short intervals of respite left us during this long and cruel day, we eat earth, and the first roots that came to hand, without being able to allay our thirst, which seemed to increase at the continual sight of the salt-pools. My companion, though apparently much the stronger of the two, having sooner felt the painful effects of hunger, and having also much sooner had recourse to the means of which I have spoken, was the prey of such agonies, that he rolled upon the ground, uttering the most heart-rending cries. Before night came, I also was suffering in the same manner. We reproached one another with the journey in the bitterest terms ; in the brief intervals, however, when the pain seemed to have entirely quitted us, we were left in a state of soft beatitude, bordering on ecstasy ; we then, with tears in our eyes, reciprocally begged pardon of each other for the harsh things we had said.

The night following brought no sleep to

our tortured senses ; we remained with eyes bent upon the desert, and thoughts fixed on our sad situation. The next day, the 3rd of June, our suffering was still more terrible ; we were both delirious. We threatened one another, and even came to blows. Our march was slow, and frequently interrupted by fatigue. Our thirst was such that, in default of water, we swallowed stones, and even had recourse to the extreme and revolting means related in so many accounts of sufferers by shipwreck, and, when the hoar frost was wet upon the ground, we saturated our linen with it, and then wrung it into our mouths. Yielding anew to the rage of hunger, we devoured roots, of the nature of which we knew nothing, the taste of which was revolting, and which made us seriously ill.

Evening succeeded to this interminable day, and the only alleviation we could give to our sufferings was a small fire, fed by a few thorns gleaned here and there from the

ground of the Pampas. Sadly seated beside our humble hearth, we felt too weak to bear any longer the horrible torment of hunger; at the end of our strength and hope, we both felt seized by the terrible temptation to put a period to our sufferings. While preparing our arms with this object, we thought of our far-off homes, of the beloved ones we were never more to see. These recollections served to raise our souls towards God. The invocation of His name made us feel how great was the cowardice by which we had allowed ourselves to be overcome; our courage was restored by prayer, and the deepest despair was succeeded by a feeling of complete passiveness: that night we slept. Our waking was less painful than it had previously been; we felt more active, though extremely weak. Tired, strained, and exhausted, our legs permitted us to advance but slowly.

We were making progress, however,

spurred by the want of food, when, some hours later, we at last had the pleasure to notice a change in the nature of the soil, now become sandy, and planted with *Generiums argentinus*, or *cortadéras* (in Indian, *Koëny*), tall tufts of grass, generally found only on the banks of lakes or streams. The ground became less difficult to our bleeding feet, and, a little further on, we reached a lake where we could quench our burning thirst. But, much as this discovery was to us, it entailed the necessity of a further discovery of food; for this water, which had caused us such great joy, and at once relieved our sufferings, soon made the feeling of hunger still more insupportable. In consequence, we determined to examine the surrounding parts of the lake, each taking an opposite side.

A first exploration having proved fruitless, I was returning exhausted and discouraged, when a sound behind me, in the midst of some high grass, caused me to turn my

head, and I perceived a puma watching my movements, and seemingly ready to spring towards me. Though this animal does not, either in shape or action, resemble the African lion, after which the Americans have named it, my first impression on seeing it was alarm; my second was to fire at this inhabitant of the desert. I struck him full in the chest; rendered furious by his wound, he dragged himself towards me, putting out his claws, as if to seize me. Fortunately, his strength failed him, and it was easy for me to finish him with my knife. At the report of my gun, my companion hastened his steps. He was agreeably surprised at the produce of my sport, and sincerely congratulated me, after satisfying himself that the blood which he saw upon my hands was not my own.

We skinned the puma in the course of a few minutes, and as quickly disembowelled it, taking care to keep the carcass turned

upon its back, so that we might not lose any of its blood, which we drank out of the flesh. In a very little time, squatted beside a brushwood fire, over which we burned, rather than cooked, the quarters of the puma, we voraciously devoured this meat, which was at once coarse and tough, but which appeared to us delicious.

After so much fatigue and privation, a day or two's rest seemed to us indispensable. The place where we were being favourable, we stopped there. Thanks to the numerous tufts of *generium* surrounding the lake, it was easy for us to shelter ourselves, and to make a softer bed than the frosty ground. The fever left us, but the state of our feet grew worse; we could not set them to the ground without feeling as if we had trodden on broken glass. After binding them up as well as we could in shreds of our linen, we judged it prudent, nevertheless, to continue our unfortunate journey, using our guns for

support until our wounds were sufficiently warmed to benumb the pain they caused us. We set ourselves the task of beguiling the way by forming projects for the happy day when we should at length reach our destination.

We travelled in this manner for three days, during which we were so lucky as to kill a hare and a buck, which sufficed to supply the inordinate cravings of our stomachs, on which the keen air of the desert operated in an almost tyrannical fashion. Far from troubling ourselves on this account, we, on the contrary, rejoiced extremely, for the nature of the country seemed by its rich appearance to promise abundant game.

But it was written on high that all sorts of misfortunes were by turn to overtake us, and that we should have surmounted the terrible torments of fatigue and hunger in vain. A more cruel trial yet awaited us. Our

compass, an object so precious to us, had been damaged by immersion in the torrent in which we had so nearly perished ; for some time afterwards, by a strange fatality, the sun had not been visible, and we had been unable to remedy this serious inconvenience. Fatigued in mind and body, we had contented ourselves with a mere glance at the instrument, the needle of which had rusted in the setting. My plan of our route had long ceased to be available, when, on the return of the sun, we perceived that we had been travelling in a wrong direction, making for the south-west, the point diametrically opposite to that to which our steps ought to have been directed. Instead of skirting the Indian territory, we had already long completely entered it.

Though the certainty of this fact was overwhelming, we nevertheless attempted to change the direction of our course, by approaching the mountains which we saw in the

distance before us, where we hoped to find ourselves in greater security. We were fortunate enough to recross a river which we had crossed the evening before, and reached them before the weather, which had been threatening since the morning, became bad. We were able to construct for ourselves a little place of shelter in one of the hollows of the soil, by the help of the numerous flat stones scattered over the surface of the ground. Here, for forty-eight hours, besieged by a frightful tempest, we cowered with the remains of our provisions, without daring to venture out; for the rain and gusts of wind brought down perfect avalanches of stones from the rocky slopes by which we were surrounded.

When the tempest abated, we found materials for a good fire in numerous thorns (*mamouël cêton**) with which the soil bristled, and all of which bore traces of previous

* Note C.

burning. This was an evident proof of the neighbourhood of Indians; for we were not ignorant of the fact that it is their habit to burn the fields they abandon.

Before following the new route which we had adopted after repairing our compass, it was urgent that we should gather a stock of provisions for our journey, and consequently to re-enter the plain, where under our eyes a great number of gamas gambolled in the morning sunshine. Several of them, slightly wounded, escaped, thanks to the distance and their agility; but one of them, wounded with two shots, appeared to us unable to fly very far, and we hastened in pursuit with as much ardour as the weakness of our limbs permitted. Its flight already appeared to slacken, and our hope of making the capture was increasing, when suddenly, at the turn of a piece of rising ground, we saw with terror a party of Indians, who were evidently on the scent of some kind of prey, man or game.

To regain our hut in the shelter of the mountain was the best thing we could do : we were fortunate enough to execute this movement without being seen. For two long days we crouched in our hiding-place, every moment apprehensive of being discovered and assailed by a savage and pitiless enemy. It was not long before we were besieged by hunger. Obligated, therefore, to venture out on the third day, to recommence our hunting, we recovered both confidence and hope on succeeding in shooting a fine gama. I had already lifted it on to my shoulder, when the Indians, very numerous this time, rushed as by enchantment from all the hollows of the ground, and surrounded us with demonstrations of ferocious joy, uttering guttural cries, and brandishing their lances, their *boleadoras*, (balls)—in Indian *locayos*—and their lassos.

I never saw anything more dreary and weird-looking than the aspect of these half-naked beings, mounted on spirited horses,

which they managed with surprising dexterity. Their robust bodies were bistre-coloured, their thick and uncombed hair hung over their faces, and revealed at every abrupt movement a set of hideous features, to which the addition of glaring colours gave an expression of diabolical ferocity.

The result of a struggle between us and this band could not be doubtful. We thought ourselves hopelessly lost; and, looking death in the face, we shook hands and exhorted each other to make the best possible defence. We then fired at the most advanced of our enemies. One of them, more severely wounded than his companions, fell from his horse; but his fall did not stop his companions, who rode down upon us in a body, while we were reloading our arms. Overcome by numbers and pierced through and through, my comrade fell to rise no more. On my side, hotly attacked, I had been pierced through the left fore-arm in endea-

vouring to guard my chest, when one of those stone balls used equally by the gauchos for overthrowing wild horses going at the top of their speed, or to stun bullocks, struck me full on the head and laid me insensible on the ground. I received other wounds and contusions, but I was not aware of them until I returned to consciousness and attempted in vain to rise.

The Indians who surrounded me, seeing my convulsive movements, were preparing to put an end to me, when one of them, judging doubtless that a man so hard to kill would make a useful slave, opposed their intention. This man, after having completely stripped me, bound my hands behind my back, then placed me upon a horse as bare as myself, tying me on tightly by the legs.

Then, for me, began a truly terrible journey, and I repeated, a century and a half later, and at the other end of the world, the tremendous ride of Mazeppa. Owing to the

continual loss of blood, I endured a succession of agonies and fainting fits, during which, I was tossed from side to side, like an inert mass, by the galloping of a wild horse goaded by his barbarous masters.

How long this torment endured, I know not; all I can recall is that, at the end of the fifth day, I was deposited on the ground without my hands being unbound. Doubtless, the Indians feared, in spite of my sad condition, that I should make an attempt to escape or to commit suicide. During the whole of this long journey, which appeared an eternity to me, I ate nothing whatever, though the Indians from time to time offered me roots.

Arrived at the camp of the horde, the place of their destination, they at length removed the tightly-bound thongs, which had tortured my hands and feet until both had become useless. Incapable of movement, I lay on the ground in the midst of my cap-

tors. Men, women, and children all looked on me with wild curiosity, without a single being amongst them seeking to procure me the least alleviation of my sufferings. At the recital of my resistance, doubtless, which my master repeated to each of them, threatening gestures were addressed to me.

Only in the evening of this half-day of poignant emotions, did they give me any food ; to which I did not feel strong enough to do honour : it was raw horse-flesh, the principal aliment of these nomads. All through the night which followed, a crowd of thoughts oppressed me. In my sleeplessness, the remembrance of my companion's death was always present to me. I formed a thousand conjectures as to the destiny which the Indians were reserving to me. What appeared most probable to me was, that they were reserving me for some solemn sacrifice ; however, it was nothing of the sort.

Without feeling the least pity for my sad

position, at which they laughed, they left me for several days without exacting anything from me. I could thus give some rest to my shattered frame, and saw the state of my wounds somewhat ameliorated, assisted only by the aid of the Divine will, and by the application of certain herbs.

But the complete nudity to which I was condemned, was not long in producing its effects. From sleeping on the ground, without shelter or covering, my restlessness increased. Sharp pains attacked all my limbs; then, in its turn, came hunger, hunger very like madness, during which I vainly tried to nourish myself on herbs and roots. I was forced to resign myself to the eating of raw flesh, like the Indians; but every time I made a meal so repugnant to me, my stomach rejected it. It was not till after a long time that I was able to overcome the horror which this kind of food inspired me.

Many a time, a morsel of raw flesh in my

hand, and reduced to dispute every mouthful of this frightful dish with the famished dogs fighting around me, I have mentally made a comparison between my ignoble repast and the elegantly ornamented table, covered with snowy linen, rich porcelain, and glittering crystal, around which the happy ones of Europe carelessly enjoy the most delicate fare and the most generous wines, accompanied by sparkling sallies of wit and pleasant discourse.

CHAPTER II.

INTO WHAT HANDS I HAD FALLEN.

At the time when the sun never set on the domains of the Spanish monarchs, the vast plains spread between Buenos Ayres and the Strait of Magellan on the one side, and on the other, between the Atlantic and the Andes as far as Mendoza, were accounted part of the vice-royalty of La Plata, though most of the nomads, by which they were then, as now, occupied, were free of all yoke. At the present time an irregular line, determined to the east by the Cordillière de Médanos and the Rio Salado, to the north by the Rio Quinto, the Cerro Verde, and the entire course of the Diamante, which it follows into the bosom of the Andes, forms the common

limit of the Argentine Confederation and of the independent Pampas ; to the south of the Rio Negro commences Patagonia.

More than three years of compulsory sojourn in these regions has made me acquainted with three distinct groups of the population, each of which corresponds with a natural division of the soil.

In the eastern zone, which runs from the Rio Salado to the Rio Colorado, live the Pampeans, properly so-called, divided into seven tribes. The wooded region, which extends between Lake Bevadero and Courou-Lafquène (Black Lake), as well as the watercourses, which run from this lake to the Rio Diamante, belong to the Mamouelches (inhabitants of the woods), who form eight important tribes, called by the Indians, Ranquel-tchets, Angneco-tchets, Catrulé-Mamouel - tchets, Quinié - Quinié - Ouitrou-tchets, Renangne-Cochets, Epougnam-tchets, Motchitoué-tchets. All these tribes are

again subdivided, and each of the subdivisions has its chief.

Finally, from the Rio Colorado to the south of the Rio Negro, a narrow but deep river, the course of which is as long as that of the Rhine or the Loire, I have counted nine tribes of Patagonians, thus named: the Payou-tchets, the Puel-tchets, the Caillihé-tchets, the Tchéouel-tchets, the Cangnecaoué-tchets, the Tchao-tchets, the Dilma-tchets, and the Yacanah-tchets.

Every one knows that Southern America is cited as being a country which, in the nature of its climate, of its soil, and its productions, presents the greatest contrast; but very little is known about the interior of the lands inhabited by the Patagonians. Some details, therefore, will not be out of place here.

From Quéquène, our starting-point, to the Sierra Ventana (so called from a gap in one of the mountains, which, seen from a

certain distance, bears a close resemblance to a window), and considerably further in the direction of the south-west, which I and my companion had been compelled to travel in the first instance, the ground over which we passed was broken, but, for the most part, of a fertility beyond conception. It was divided here and there by torrents, the clear waters of which flowed rapidly over rocky and uneven beds, till they passed into a deep lake, the level of which never varied, whatever might be the volume of water thrown into it. The Indians called this lake Gualichulafquéne (The Devil's Lake).

All this part of the American desert, as far as the Rio Colorado, wears the most smiling aspect; cultivated by an active and intelligent nation, this country would be a source of great riches, for the soil is everywhere black and virgin, and would easily return a hundredfold the seed sown in it. Under a layer of tall and heavy grass, scarcely pene-

trated by the frost, we could, without difficulty, distinguish the growth of the previous year, only inferior to it in colour, and under this last a third growth, the decomposition of which was not yet completed. In these parts we found abundant and varied game—gamas, llamas, nandous (the ostriches of Patagonia), and partridges of the largest size. We found there, also, a number of small pools of soft and agreeable water.

From the Colorado, everywhere in the direction of the south-west and south, this fertility becomes irregular and sensibly diminishes, appearing only at intervals, the soil being here sandy, there rocky, or, oftener still, saltpetrous, and covered with salt and stagnant pools of deceptive clearness. Pools of this kind, extremely common in the north and north-west latitudes, are often found, in the south and south-west, in the midst of other salt-pools, generally deep, of great

extent, the levels of which frequently vary, and the waters of which are warm in winter and icy in summer. These pools furnish a magnificent salt, of which the Indians make ample provision, both for their own consumption and that of other tribes, to whom they sell it at a very low price.

The margins of these pools are generally, during winter, entirely bare of verdure; but their blue waters, imprisoned between deep banks of a chalky nature, form an admirable contrast, and, on a fine day, one might almost imagine oneself transported on to the bosom of an icy sea.

During the summer, on the top of the banks of these pools, grow a great quantity of thick bushes, called by the Indians *Tchilpet*, the leaves of which are of great use to them in curing their wounded cattle. The lower parts are abundantly supplied with a sort of vegetation composed of little round thin stalks, ending in a point, without any leaves,

and not exceeding twenty-five *centimètres* in height. The interior conformation of this grass exactly resembles that of the common rush, but its thickness does not exceed that of a knitting-needle. Horses and oxen sometimes eat it, but its toughness and sourness make it indigestible. Finally, at a considerable distance, this singular meeting of fertility and barrenness ends suddenly; mountains of black granite, varying but slightly in form, of severe aspect, insurmountable and isolated one from another, complete the strange picture of wild and silent nature, at once superb and melancholy.

Beyond appear the shores of the Rio Colorado, which are very uneven towards its source. This river flows from a mountainous country, intersected by deep valleys, through which run other streams, also issuing from the bosom of the Andes. Some come from the west-north-east, others from the west-south-east, but these various affluents

only join with the Colorado much further off.* At the part where, so to speak, commences the vast enamelled plain of verdure, stretching away to the eastern coast, and most generally inhabited by the Puelches, arranged in order on both sides of the river, a great quantity of *Generiums argentinus* are met with, the prodigious height of which conceal the roukahs (native houses) from the view of travellers, who thus fall unsuspectingly into the hands of the Indians. These tufted grasses serve also as the lurking-places of pumas and jaguars, on the watch for passing gamas.

To the Rio Colorado, which I had crossed before the commencement of my captivity, attaches one of my most striking recollections. It was on the left bank that I and my companion enjoyed the only pleasure we were permitted to taste during our painful and adventurous peregrination. This plea-

* Note D.

sure, which we then thought so great, was the finding of some turnips of monstrous size, as perfectly grown and exquisite in flavour as if they had been cultivated by the hand of a skilful gardener. While taking complete advantage of our good fortune, for which we sincerely thanked Heaven, we bewildered ourselves with conjectures as to how this vegetable could have grown, in regions much colder than Chili, and so far removed from all people that, doubtless, no human being had yet come upon them. It was not until I had lived some time in the midst of the Indians, that I found an explanation of the mystery. I attributed the springing up of this vegetable to some excursion of these savages, knowing their habit of carrying off indiscriminately all they can lay their hands on in their pillages among the Hispano-Americans, and their readiness to throw away, during their return, everything useless or unknown to them. But what,

nevertheless, seemed to me quite as surprising as the discovery itself, was the impossibility of ever finding other turnips, for afterwards I had occasion many times to pass through these latitudes with the Indians my masters.

It need hardly be said, that the manner of living of all the nomads of whom I am about to write, differs by reason of numerous varieties in the nature of the soil and climate. Some, residing in the northern and most temperate portion of the Pampas, are partly clothed, and are influenced by the neighbourhood of the Argentine populations, with whom they are alternately at peace or war. Others, Patagonians, having under their eyes nothing but the sea-shore or the immensity of their barren steppes, live in the rudest and most primitive nomadic manner.

The tribe, into the hands of which fate had delivered me, was that of the Poyuches, who wander indifferently on either side of

the Rio Negro, from Pacheco Island to the foot of the Cordilleras, a mountainous country intersected with deep valleys. The kind of life led by these not very numerous Indians offers less interest than that of the Eastern Patagonians, and their only means of existence is in hunting the guanaco, or wild llama, nandous, and gamas. Though their region is not, as has been hitherto supposed, completely arid, the Poyuches possess but few cattle, and these, both horses and oxen, come from exchanges made with other tribes of *Makounes turquets*, or mantles of guanaco leather, which are generally much appreciated by the natives and by the Hispano-Americans; but as this traffic is carried on only on a very small scale, they are extremely poor, and can but seldom engage in the distant expeditions constantly undertaken by the Puelches and Pampeans, from whom they are separated by great distances. Their intelligence is limited, their

character grave, their physiognomy stamped with a wild ferocity and incredible hardihood. They are not very communicative, but good-tempered and serviceable to one another. They are very courageous and daring in the infrequent wars in which they have occasion to take part, but most barbarous towards their Christian enemies, whom they torture and kill without pity.

Their type is nearly the same as that of the Eastern Patagonians; but they are generally thinner, and their feet less well formed, in consequence of walking a great deal. They occupy themselves solely with hunting, which is at once a diversion for them and a means of subsistence. They dwell under tents constructed of the skins of horses, or of sea-calves, caught on the eastern coast during the winter.

Their habitations, which are very light, are formed of crooked wooden posts set in three rows, the middle row higher than the

others, to which it is fastened with leathern cords, forming a sort of triangle like that of a roof. Skins, artistically stitched together with fibres extracted from flesh, cover this frail framework and solidify it by their tension, which is effected by pinning their lower edges to the ground with little pegs of bone. The interiors of these houses are divided into two parts exactly alike, both again subdivided into several small compartments, in which each Indian deposits whatever is most precious to him; at night some guanaco skins spread upon the ground serve as beds for men and women, who sleep together after taking off their mantles, the only vestment they wear during the day and the only covering they use on going to rest.

The superstition of these savages is beyond conception. According to them, both north and south are unfavourable to them: the north is the point where the living disappear for ever, suddenly carried off by

evil spirits coming from the south. They greatly fear death, and pretend that the only way to prolong their existence is to sleep with their heads either to the east or west.

Cold as these regions are for the greater part of the year, the Indians who inhabit them bathe every day before dawn, whatever may be the season, and without distinction of sex or age. This usage, to which I was compelled to submit, powerfully contributes, I presume, to secure them against all kinds of maladies; and I am convinced that it is owing to these frequent baths I have preserved the health I still enjoy. To look at these Indians, covered with vermin, it would be difficult to believe in their frequent ablutions; as an ocular witness, I think I owe it to the Eastern Patagonians to clear them of the charge of personal filthiness, under which they have hitherto lain. It is generally after their morning bath that such Indians as possess herds mount on horseback

and ride after them, for the purpose of driving them back into the neighbourhood of the tents. When the weather is bad, however, they discontinue this occupation, and remain within their habitations all the time the bad weather lasts, without even thinking of eating. I have often, in truth, been much astonished at the facility with which these gluttons go without food for an entire day, stretched upon the flooded floors of their roukahs, held down by fear ; for bad weather in these regions is truly fearful. It is a mixture of rain pouring in torrents, blinding lightning, and thunder ceaselessly reverberating ; to all this is added the terrible blast of the pampero, an icy wind coming from the depths of Patagonia, hissing and roaring in the same breath, often during consecutive hours, rending and overthrowing everything, even tearing up by the roots the smallest plants it meets with on its passage.

The great superstition which characterizes

the Indians, seems to increase every time that any phenomenon takes place before their eyes ; they then imagine that its causes are connected with their own behaviour, and according to the nature of this phenomenon they experience joy or fear. A tempest, for example, paralyzes all their faculties and inspires them with the greatest terror. It would seem as if, unknown to themselves, their consciences were tormented, and they felt in danger of the Divine wrath, for they dare not raise their eyes to the angry clouds. They press one against the other, their faces hidden in their hands, without attempting to secure the skin-covering of their *roukas* when torn off by the wind.

But a few months had passed, and all of the European that remained in me was the mind and heart, when I was sold to some Puelches on a visit, who gave to my masters, as greedy as they were poor, an ox, a

horse, and the portraits of my family. This bargain appeared so advantageous, that although it had been impossible for me to render them any service, they did not the less fail to extol my known, or unknown, good qualities to their visitors, who, being persuaded that they had made an excellent purchase, smiled with an air of satisfaction which, under any other circumstances, would certainly have greatly amused me; for it served only to make them appear more ugly.

I felt no regret at leaving the Poyuches, for short as the time was during which I had been amongst them, it had sufficed to give me a poor opinion of them. Their women, however, are very active, and exhibit a good deal of ability in making clothing. As to the men, beyond hunting, in which they show themselves both skilful and ferocious, they live in the greatest idleness. They are incredibly greedy and voracious, and very dirty in their habits; yet they display a good

deal of skill in the dressing of their hideous heads,—anointing their hair with horse-fat, pulling out the hairs of their eyebrows and beards, and coating their faces with coloured earths. Like all Indians, they possess small leathern bags containing the colours necessary, which they always carry with them.

The Poyuches give the name of Melly-roumey-co (Four small rivers) to the source of the Rio Negro, because, at its departure from the Cordilleras, it receives four affluents; but further on, when it reappears, after passing through Tiger Lake, they call it, as we do, Black River, from the aspect given to it by its depth and narrowness. Its rapid course is tortuous so long as it runs through an uneven country, but often regular in the plain, where its precipitous banks are sometimes fertile. The waters of this stream offer to the Indians a safe passage only towards their source; they cross it frequently, however, at any spot, with the

help of bundles of rushes, to which they cling with their hands while swimming with their feet.

On the banks of the Rio Negro are still encamped several tribes, and amongst the number that of the Puelches, one of the most important, from its numbers as well as from its continual relations with all the other tribes—with those of the extreme point of Magellan, as with the Mamouelches, situated in the neighbourhood of Mendoza, at the north-west of the Pampas.

It was into the hands of this tribe, be it remembered, that I was passed by the Poyuches. I remained during six consecutive months in the midst of this important tribe, and was thus easily able to study and compare it with other tribes of the Eastern Patagonians, about whom so much has been said by navigators.

At the commencement of my installation amongst them, I flattered myself with the

idea of being better treated by them than I had been by the Poyuches ; but I had been with them only a very few days when, recognizing the impossibility of my being of any service to them, on account of my ignorance of horsemanship, they brutally ill-used me, and heaped insults on me. In this way it was that the words *Théoa-ouignecaë* (dog of a Christian), *Ouérah-ouignecaë* (bad Christian), were the first of which I learned the signification. I many times tried to make myself understood, and demanded what motive they had for treating me in such a manner ; but their only answer was to use me more harshly than before. After one of these experiences, my mortification was such that, considering my family and country both lost to me for ever, I could not refrain from shedding bitter tears. The Indians perceiving this, their fury knew no bounds ; they beat me so, that I thought they were going to kill me, as they threatened to do.

From that time I concealed my sorrow under a continual and lying smile, by which they allowed themselves to be taken in. Displaying all the good-will and address of which I was capable, I made rapid progress in the art of equitation, and in the knowledge of their language, founding on these acquirements my hopes of escape. With like quickness I learned to use the lasso and the boléadora (*locayo*) which play so great a part in their existence, and which are, in fact, indispensable to all who venture into the American desert.

In this tribe I remarked that the men were extremely tall—not inferior in stature to the Patagonians. The Puelches are well made, with well-proportioned limbs ; their faces wear an expression of pride not at all in contradiction with their general behaviour. They are nomads by taste, and not from necessity, for the nature of their country is generally one of great fertility. Their chief

passions are hunting and drunkenness. Their religious ideas, like those of all the other tribes, are limited to the admission of two gods—that of good, and that of evil. They frequently give themselves up to the pillage of farms, whence they carry off great numbers of horses and oxen; their food consists of horseflesh, or of the flesh of ostriches and gamas taken in the chase; the choicest morsels they eat are the liver, lungs, and kidneys, raw, soaked in hot or salted and curdled blood—for they know the use of salt. The tents of the Puelches are more regular and more spacious than those of the Poyuches; often, on casting a glance into their depths, I recognized household objects or vestments captured at the price of blood from some unfortunate Hispano-American. The Indians, whose habit it was to watch my slightest movements, did not fail to notice these glances, and always hastened to put the objects of my notice out of sight, under

the notion that I might think of appropriating them, crying out as they did so : “ *Ouakoune-tchipato émy ouésah-ouignecaë* ” (Get out, you villanous Christian) ; or, “ *Ouakoune-mouléta-émy véécah metène* ” (Get outside ; it’s quite good enough for you). Apparently they seriously thought so, for, whether it was hot or cold, I never had any other bed than the ground, in whatever state it might be, and no other shelter than the sky.

Apart from their cruelty, these Indians were both industrious and intelligent. The harness of their horses, composed of a bridle, saddle, and stirrups, are curious specimens of their industry ; these are plaited in such great perfection, as to make it difficult to be believed that they are the work of their hands.

Using very bad knives, they cut with unequalled address and dexterity, from the skins of young horses, the hair being first removed, and the skins otherwise specially

prepared, the fine thongs intended for this kind of manufacture. Their saddles are constructed of reeds, covered with flexible leather; some are of wood, like the backs of two chairs joined together by triangles at the ends. Two holes pierced in the front serve to hang wooden stirrups of triangular form, the openings of which, at the widest part, will not admit more than three fingers. Skins placed between the saddle and the back of the horse preserve the animal from injury under the extreme pressure of the girth. The same skins serve for beds during a journey. Their lassos are at least thirty feet long; they are either cut from a single piece of ox-hide or plaited. The Indians are accustomed to fasten one end to their saddle-girth, and to carry the length of lasso coiled in the left hand. The extremity is furnished with a running knot and noose, to which they give an opening more or less wide, according to the kind and size of the

animal they wish to capture. They throw it with the right hand, after whirling it several times above their heads, taking care to keep open the loop with its running knot. From this it will be seen that these lassos differ greatly from the usual description given of them, and that they do not at all resemble those used by the Russians in the wars ever memorable for our country. The spurs worn by these savages are made of pieces of wood, each armed with a point of metal or bone, and very long, serving instead of a rowel. These goads are carried one on either foot. The Indians, though exercised in their use, generally draw blood with them from their horses, which they ride at great speed.

These horses are middle-sized and well formed, easily broken in, and almost indefatigable. I have often seen these animals, who give place in no respect to the most beautiful Andalusian steeds, gallop during a whole day and night without taking anything

but water. The Indians employ a very brutal method of breaking them in: once caught in the lasso, they are thrown down upon the ground and their feet bound together; a bit is then passed into the mouth and fastened tightly under the lower lip, the skin being first peeled from the gums and lips, for the purpose of rendering them more sensitive to the pressure of this too supple curb. After this they are saddled and compelled to rise, two men holding them, one by the muzzle and ears, the other by a thong with a running knot passed round the two fore-legs; the breaker-in, armed with a wide thong of raw hide (*trupouet*), a sort of riding-whip, very hard and heavy, terminating in a piece of wood intended to strike either the flanks or the head of his horse, then springs lightly on to the animal. At a given signal the assistants, releasing their hold at the same moment, give liberty to the courser, which frequently darts away like a

flash of light, after having let fly a good number of kicks, and curveting from side to side. Some of them resist the prodigious efforts made by their riders to turn them to the right or left, and roll over with them; but, in general, however violent may be their first resistance, in two or three days they become sufficiently quiet to be mounted bare-backed.

It is at about two years and a half old that the Indians break them in such a way as to test their swiftness: they make them cover a certain distance at one breathing; those that do not easily reach the determined point are considered useless for service, and pitilessly condemned to be eaten.

The Puelches inhabit the latitudes between the Rio Negro and the Rio Colorado, which they rarely cross. The eastern side is composed of fertile plains, on which there are a number of lakes abounding with fish, and of which the water is excellent. The

western side is not less fertile; it is very mountainous, and watered by a number of torrents that swell the Colorado. A large number of salt and loathsome pools are found there, as in all the sterile latitudes of Central America.

Having transactions with the Indians of all the tribes without exception, the Puelches are the most capable of giving information concerning the immense territory occupied by all their nomad companions, from the Straits of Magellan to Mendoza; for they very frequently pass through their country. They are generally very fond of visiting, which gives an increase of work to the women, who are bound to supply food to all comers. Visitors are saluted by the women and their children. The head of the family does not perform this civility until they are seated, and have swallowed a few mouthfuls of water. After salutations have been exchanged, and in the midst of profound silence

on the part of the women and children, the guests describe in turn the object of their visit in a long discourse, not wanting in courtesy, nor even in a certain poetical character. Their language is guttural and sing-song. The master of the house, after having religiously listened to all his guests, answers them at equal length, and finishes by addressing to them his thanks for their kindness in visiting him; then, without another word, he leaves them to do honour to the repast which the women hasten to set before them. This repast is generally composed of raw kidneys and lungs cut into small pieces and placed in little vessels filled with curdled blood, salted. When the guests have eaten their fill, conversation commences in a familiar tone, very different from the first, for there is then no more spouting. It is then that the children, wishing to show friendly attention to their father's guests, come and group themselves closely around them. The

guests, by way of caresses, take from their young heads some of the numerous insects that harbour there and eat them, reciprocity being *de rigueur*.

The men very rarely speak to the women, whom they are forbidden by custom even to look in the face, without they are their relations, their mother-in-law excepted.

Every visitor receives ample hospitality, and may remain with his hosts for an unlimited time, during which he will always be an object of the greatest attention. When the hour of rest approaches, the greatest silence is kept by all, the guests absent themselves for a few minutes, during which time the master of the house hastily prepares for them a couch formed of all the most precious skins in his roukah.

After the sun has gone down, the traveller, however near he may be to his destination, cannot, without infringing the rules of decorum, present himself before a tent;

for that he must await the rising of the sun. Only the bearers of orders from the caciques are exempted from this etiquette.

The women receive visitors of their own sex, and treat them with a thousand cajoleries, even when they are sworn enemies. Their conversation is carried on almost in a whisper, while they employ themselves in pulling out one another's eyebrows, or painting each other's faces. Ceremonial does not forbid the visitors to accompany the mistress of the house out of doors when her occupations call her thither ; thus they are often seen going and coming. This prerogative is not enjoyed by the men, unless with regard to the chase : as they are seated on their arrival, so they must remain till their departure.

The visitors never failed to inquire of their host concerning me, which flattered him extremely. On these occasions he pretended even to feel friendly towards me, and made me eat with him, and, like a man who

knows his calling, I affected to be the dupe of his artifice. I thus, by turns, saw Indians of all the Patagonian tribes. I was a rare curiosity for them, as I judged by the manner in which they contemplated me, and by their surprise in finding in *laftra-ouigneacä* (a little Christian) faculties like their own.

I afterwards saw the Tchéouelches, the most backward and poorest race of nomads, whose manners are the most primitive. Their language, as well as their person, has something ferocious in it; the sounds they articulate are so excessively guttural as at first to make me think they spoke a tongue different from that of the other Patagonians; by listening attentively, however, I easily understood them. The whiteness of my body appeared to interest them greatly, as well as the colour of my hair, become very long and reddened by the action of the sun. They expressed a desire^d to hear me speak in

French, which became a subject of general hilarity.

These Indians are somewhat inferior in stature to the Eastern Patagonians and the Puelches ; but they are not less remarkable for the regularity of their forms. They have very broad and square shoulders, chests very deep and full, and arms and legs of middle size ; feet very wide and flat-soled. Their head is large, the forehead open and prominent ; the cheek-bones are very high, the face flat, the chin slightly advanced ; the mouth large, and generally partly opened ; the eyes are black, very large and horizontal, having an expression of ferocious wildness. A nose often hooked, long and thin, with close-drawn nostrils, gives them something of the appearance of birds of prey. Their lips are slightly thick ; their ears large and lengthened by bulky ornaments of their own manufacture, which hang down upon their shoulders. They wear their hair generally rolled

up on the top of the head like the indigenes of Paraguay. They use bows and arrows, and handle the sling (*ouitrou-courah-ouëy*) very well, the lasso, and boleadora (*locayo*), a set of balls to the number of three, fixed to leathern thongs of equal length, and generally of hard wood, or of a sort of granite very common in their latitudes. These they use very skilfully, striking down with them, at a great distance, the wild llamas which they hunt on foot.

None of the Tchéouelches possess horses. The youngest of them rush in pursuit of the game, and confine themselves to the killing of it, leaving to the women and old men the work of skinning and transporting it on their shoulders while they continue the chase. They are also accustomed to pull out the hair from all parts of their bodies ; but, very little given to ideas of coquetry, they content themselves with rudely painting their faces. They are most agile in the chase, and almost inde-

fatigable. I have seen them run quickly for several successive hours without being at all fatigued.

The Tchéouelches are very temperate, as compared with the majority of the other Patagonians, and in spite of the great exercise they take in hunting. It is almost needless to say, as may be imagined, that their meals are composed specially of raw meat, of roots, or frequently of sea-calf flesh, for they give themselves up to fishing many days during the summer. Their latitudes are sterile, and extend more than two hundred leagues from the southern limit of the Rio Negro. On the approach of winter they sensibly draw nearer to the lesser chain of the Andes, which offers them a surer protection from the inclemencies of the season, and where they find quantities of shrubs, the materials of a good fire.

Their clothes are composed of a sort of short-sleeved shirt, made of six seal-skins fastened upon a perfectly softened llama skin,

the warm fur of which they wear next their bodies. This costume is generally shaped in the back, and ornamented on the outside with strange designs, which give it a grotesque appearance. In combat these vestments serve them for breast-plates ; they add to them a sort of flat and round head-dress, formed of two thick pieces of leather sewed together, and firmly fixed under the chin. The liberty enjoyed amongst each other by these Indians is excessive, as may be seen : in the other tribes, if a visitor is hungry, he takes great care not to allow his hosts to know it, and they, on their side, never fail to press upon him more food than he can take ; while the Tchéouelche is restrained by no etiquette. He enters the first roukah he comes to, blows up the fire on the hearth, and, without saying a word, helps himself to a piece of meat, which he roasts or eats raw at his good pleasure ; after which he walks away as silently as he came, without

taking any notice of the master of the house, who, for his part, observes him with as much indifference as if he were used to seeing him.

The Tchéouelches appear to be even less accessible to pain than the other nomads. They dress their own wounds with the greatest coolness, not excepting those of the gravest kind, without uttering sound of complaint. The women occupy themselves with the affairs of the household, and help the men in the making of leathern mantles (*makounes turquets*), and carpets (*kiliankous*) differing only from the others in their greater size. These objects are made of guanaco and marten skins, which the women coat with chewed liver, afterwards tanning them by hand, by rubbing them vigorously. That operation finished, they artistically collect the different skins, and, suppressing all their defective portions, sew them together very neatly with fibres of flesh.

This labour sometimes lasts for entire months; it is a work of great patience. When it is finished, the Indians stitch the skins in every way, and flatten the seams with a rough-surfaced stone, which serves them at the same time to rub the whole, and make it completely flexible; they afterwards proceed to the ornamentation of the leather, on which they trace in red and black the strange and capricious designs with which they cover all the seams. These mantles, generally sought for by the Puelche Indians, Patagonians; and Pampeans, are not less highly appreciated by the Spaniards. The Tchélouelches, Poyuches, and Patagonians, who pass the greater part of the year clad in this sort of vestment, are able to expose themselves to the most intense cold without feeling its attacks.

As the Poyuches had already done, the Puelches, out of a spirit of speculation, sold me to the Eastern Patagonians, who proposed

to themselves to follow the same course with regard to me. This succession of new masters was far from being agreeable to me, and most often I was a loser by the change. However, this time I felt less repugnance : my new masters seemed to me to have something more human in their manner. In stature they appeared to me to approach six (French) feet ; their type appeared to me to differ little from that of the Puelches. I found them slightly longer in the back, perhaps, compared with their height, and, seeing them on horseback, one might easily have believed them to be taller than they are in reality. Their limbs are well proportioned ; their heads are large, almost square, and flat-crowned ; their foreheads very round and projecting, and their chins prominent, which, with their long, thin nose, give them singular profiles. They have projecting cheek-bones, eyes slightly horizontal ; but their habit of pulling out their eyebrows

and of painting black the hollows of the lower lids, has not a little contributed to the belief that their eyes are altogether horizontal.

They have large mouths and rather thick lips, but not so thick as those of the Tchóuelches; their teeth are small, even, and of a glittering whiteness, which the brown colour of their skin makes even more intense. They have very wide and square shoulders, regular chests, and strongly-marked bosoms. Their hands and feet are small compared with their height, and armed with well-shaped nails, which they wear very long.

Having had so many opportunities of judging of their strength, and been witness of their numerous exercises, I can affirm, without fear of being taxed with exaggeration, that it greatly exceeds that of Europeans. I have seen these men easily catch with the lasso an untamed horse and stop it suddenly in its unbridled career, resisting

unaided the terrible shock of the struggling animal, and maintaining their position until the moment when, at point of strangulation, it fell to the ground; but I have never remarked that in these exercises their muscles were more apparent than in their normal state. Such a result could not, it seems to me, be set down to the account of skill. The physical organization of the Indians is, moreover, greatly superior to that of civilized man; they bear with the greatest facility prolonged privations during the journeys of two or three months which they make almost without resting, galloping day and night. When they go four or five hundred leagues to pillage, besides from twenty to thirty choice horses taken by each, they provide themselves with nothing but lassos, lances, and boleadoras, which will serve them both to secure the means of subsistence and for fighting. Only the greatest gluttons amongst them place between the skins which

they use as saddles a small quantity of *angnime-hilo* (meat cut into thin slices, salted, and dried in the sun), which they eat with *yéouine*, a mixture of horse and bullock fat. The poorest carry with them only a little *chassi-cofquet*, a sort of loaf of salt, baked in dung-ash after having been ground and kneaded with sweet herbs, which they lick only from time to time, as they experience hunger or thirst.

The expeditions do not return in a body as they set out. Interest obliges them to keep at some distance from one another, so as to be able to keep the same number of horses; for it frequently happens that some of these escape from their surveillance, and go to swell the booty of their companions, who refuse to restore them. It is only the indolent, or those who sink under the weight of their fatigue, who are exposed to the loss of their plunder; but these cases are rare, for their activity and avarice are such that,

even long after their return into the bosom of their respective homes, they assiduously continue to watch their herds day and night, those only being exempt from this additional fatigue who have families, or who consent to pay generously one of their neighbours for exercising this watchfulness. Women even undertake this kind of occupation, and generally receive a much larger remuneration than men.

When an animal is lost, the Indians make an active search for it in all directions, and they are so skilful as almost always to recover it. Whatever may be the nature of the land, whether covered with a heavy growth of verdure or marked by the most complete sterility, miry even, they recognize the trace of its passage at a glance amid a great number of the footprints of other animals of the same kind. With so much sagacity are they gifted that, in their explorations, they distinguish the traces of herds

belonging to Christians, and instantly follow them up.

The Patagonian tribes of most importance are nine in number. They have at their head caciques of the first order, whose power extends over the sub-tribes, which bear an infinite variety of names. Among these last, which are stationed on the Rio Negro, I can cite several which, by their dealing with the Hispano-Americans, have become celebrated; they are, it is true, very much weakened now, and whatever interest attaches to them belongs to their past.

The first of these are the Toluchets, who traverse the space comprised between the Rio Negro (southern limit), Lake Rozas, and the territory of the Poyuches, my first masters, for a distance of at least a hundred leagues in the south-west direction, where it joins that of the Tchétchéhets, with whom they were for a long time allied. These two tribes had relations with the first Spaniards,

who founded the village of Carmen, or Patagones, of which for a certain length of time they made the prosperity. But Carmen, peopled by gauchos expatriated for crime, and speedily tired of the peaceable life to which they were restricted, saw its importance suddenly diminished. Desiring to return to their adventurous course of life, the gauchos abandoned the colony for the purpose of going amongst the Indians, and exchanging their products for the cattle of the latter. It resulted from this that the Indians, deprived of their cattle and wishing to get others, made frequent raids into the provinces of Buenos Ayres, leading to bloody reprisals, which they avenged on the colony of Carmen by several times devastating and destroying it. Thus, by turn, this port was seen to be enriched at the expense of the *estancieros*, or farmers, of the Argentine provinces, and ruined by the Indians, Calli-Hétchets or non-speakers, so called by the

other Indians on account of the fantastic and silent character which they have assumed since their decadence, which dates from the death of several chiefs considered by them invincible.

The expression of these Indians is hard and ferocious, sometimes anxious. They speak listlessly, and in monosyllables; their sole occupation is hunting, to which they devote themselves from one end of the year to the other. They do not appear to possess much intelligence, and they are so idle that they do not even take the trouble to plait their harness, which is of the roughest kind. However, this idleness, which is remarkable also among their women, does not prevent their being excessively ambitious, and inclined to coquetry. They have acquired some, at least, of the vices of the Americans, and it may be said of them that pride and drunkenness are not the least of those which they possess.

Lastly, the third tribe, the Langnequétrou-tchets, whose name corresponds with that of the cacique, by whom they were organized, is well known in the provinces of Buenos Ayres, and to all the nomads, without exception. The Indians who compose it were drawn from different points; many of them were recruited by Langnequétrou, related to Calfoucourah (Blue-stone), under whom he fulfilled the functions of orderly officer, but against whom he rebelled in consequence of some outbreak, which nearly cost him his life. Spurred on by the desire of vengeance, pride, and ambition, this Indian fled to the shore of the Rio Negro, where he arrived escorted by all the malcontent spirits he had recruited by the way. Under the impulse of his deep resentment, he had no rest until he was prepared to commence against other tribes a war from which all fairness and loyalty were excluded. He sold himself to the Argentines, solely to con-

duct their troops into the camp of his brothers, whom he several times caused to be surprised in the night and massacred. He did yet more: skilfully profiting by the dissensions rife in the bosom of the Spanish republics, he betrayed each party in turn, often conducting them into ambushes, in which he murdered every man of them for the purpose of enriching himself with their spoils.

The skill and courage of which, on so many occasions, this man gave proof, made him a sort of personage whom the Spaniards sought to attach to themselves at any price. He received their envoys, and ratified the treaties submitted to him. For some time he appeared to forget that he was a child of the desert, and led successfully several expeditions, of small importance it is true, but which gained for him the confidence of the Buenos Ayrean government. In 1859, Langnequé-trou went to White Bay to confer with the

Argentine soldiers on the subject of the organization of a strong expedition which was to be directed against the Pampean tribes and the Mamouelches owing allegiance to Calfoucourah. Like all Indians, passionately fond of alcoholic drink, he entered the *Huna propéria* (spirit store), to enjoy the pleasure of drinking, but found himself face to face with an Argentine officer, who recognized him, and reproached him with the death of several relations, officers like himself, who had fallen victims of his treachery. The insolent replies made by Langnequétrou so irritated this officer that, suddenly drawing a pistol, he blew out the chief's brains.

The Indians, amongst whom I was living at that period as a slave, had many times sworn the death of Langnequétrou, whom they profoundly execrated ; but, strange to say, on learning the news of his tragic end, they forgot all their grievances, and thought only of avenging in his death that of one of their

own people. With this view, they speedily organized a formidable expedition, which pillaged and burnt the town of White Bay, the heroic defence of which cost them heavily in dead and wounded.

According to what Patagonians in general say, the immense desert comprised between the chain of the Andes, the south bank of the Rio Negro, the eastern coast and the Straits of Magellan, is not, as it has hitherto been said to be, completely sterile; a third, at least, of this extent is extremely fertile, principally on the eastern side, and at the extreme point of Magellan. I can, besides, cite in support of this opinion, the several spots in which I have lived in the neighbourhood of the Andes, and in that of Los Serranos, which have a truly charming aspect of picturesqueness and fertility, at the sight of which one is filled with wonder, and readily understands how possible it is for man to find there all he requires for his sub-

sistence. Thus, in spite of the want of horses and cattle, the Indians live there in the greatest carelessness, solely on the produce of the chase. The land over which they move is divided into parts wooded with algarrobas and chagnals, into the bosom of which they retire during the winter, and into valleys traversed by a great number of torrents, and covered with lakes abounding in wild ducks and other water-fowl, that would be the delight of European sportsmen, but which, undisturbed by the Indians, whose only food is the raw guanaco, or ostrich flesh, never fear the approach of man.

Painful as my slavery was, I could not refrain at times from admiring this superb country, the sight of which would have rejoiced me, if it had not every instant recalled my sad position. I might even have made out a kind of existence with my masters if the ill-treatment, to which I was constantly exposed, had not rendered my sufferings

yet greater, and made me dread a tragic end.

I lost all hope of ever again embracing those who were so dear to me, and of returning to my country. However, the desire to free myself from the terrible yoke that weighed upon me was dominant, and in my troubled mind many projects of flight were constantly struggling. This thought of flight alone gave me strength to bear the privations of all kinds imposed on me by my condition as a slave. Forced to live in a state of dumbness, not being able to make a gesture without the reason being demanded, or of taking a step without being immediately followed, I ardently yearned to be left, if even for an instant, alone with my thoughts. The Indians suspected my desire, and conceived against me the strongest distrust; their hatred seemed to increase, and I was several times nearly falling a victim to it. Often, when I have been sleeping

near them, their minds were so disturbed that they have waked several times and sprung upon me, armed, and threatening, pretending that Vitaouènetrou (God) had informed them of my project of flight, and ordered them to watch me closely and punish me for this criminal thought. They then pressed me with questions for the purpose of sounding me; and when at length they left me, it was never without cruelly ill-treating me. Many times, under these terrible circumstances, I had to arm myself with great resignation to avoid giving way to the desire for vengeance, with which my dignity as a civilized man inspired me.

These frequently repeated nocturnal surprises, so powerfully reacted on me as to make me subject to fits of faintness, resulting often in convulsive tremblings, that lasted for more than half an hour at a time. At the end of these attacks I was completely prostrated and depressed in spirits, during which

time I felt so disgusted with existence that I would willingly have sought or faced death as the greatest of benefits. Being, as I have said, condemned to live in a state of dumbness, even the moments that were free of uneasiness and morbid depression, passed slowly and painfully; for the Indians never admitted me into their company, and when duty called me into their huts, I was speedily driven out again with brutal violence. It may readily be imagined that I never waited for that gracious order to be repeated to me, accompanied as it always was by threatening gestures, or blows with a lasso belabouring my back and chest. I went pensively away and rejoined the herd confided to my charge, installing myself with it anew, both day and night, and that whatever the state of the weather might be, often exposed to insupportable heat, my body burned by the ardent summer sun, or enduring all the severity of bad weather, rain, wind, and frost. In the

latter case, I suffered terribly from benumbed hands and feet. Very often, after passing several hours on horseback, I have been obliged, in descending, to seize the horse's mane with my teeth, for the purpose of letting myself down as gently as possible, my feet and hands being useless to me, and on reaching the ground I have felt as if I had fallen on broken glass. To enable myself to rise, I had to apply active friction to my limbs, after which I forced myself to walk, gradually increasing my speed into a sharp run, and with good results.

In spite of this series of continual sufferings, and of the daily threats of the Indians, at the sight of whom I could not repress a certain feeling of alarm, I never tired of seriously thinking of making my escape. Whatever good-will I showed, and whatever desire I had to familiarize myself with all the exercises of the Patagonians, it was impossible for me to succeed so quickly as I

wished, or as they thought necessary. Finding they could turn me but to small profit, they sold me to the Pampeans who came to visit them, after having effected several invasions of the territory of Buenos Ayres. These savages gave them in exchange for my person some horses and a few *pillkènes*, pieces of common red or black cloth.

From the moment this sale was in question, the behaviour of the Patagonians towards me became entirely changed; they affected attachment for me, doubtless with the view of raising themselves in the opinion of their visitors, whose manners and bearing inspired me with more confidence. At the end of a few days, which I passed almost in inactivity, and during which I was, in some respects, as well treated as the Pampean visitors, came at length the moment of departure.

I could not, in spite of all the hardships I had endured among the Patagonians, help

feeling somewhat sad at contemplating for the last time those picturesque spots, so often witnesses of my tears and sufferings. I rode downcast and silent between two Pampeans, to whom my habitual dumbness appeared to be displeasing, for they addressed me in bad Spanish, overwhelming me with questions, translating and considerably amplifying my answers to the rest of the band, who amused themselves greatly at my expense, and having not the least idea that their language was familiar to me, thus enabled me to judge them better than they could judge me. In this way the time passed on the journey to their place of residence. They inquired where my country was; if it was far off; how long I had taken in coming from one continent to the other; what men lived on on board a ship; how they procured fresh water sufficient to quench their thirst during so long and perilous a voyage.

At the answers I gave them they exhibited as much astonishment as incredulity, and trying to read in my eyes the expression of truth, probably believed that I was tricking them. They further demanded what motives could have been so strong as to induce me to separate myself from my family, for whom they saw that I felt so great an affection; for at the sight of the portraits of my dear parents, now in their possession, I could not restrain my tears, nor refrain from making an aggressive movement towards the man who held them. However, involuntary as was my action, it was foreseen by the Indian, who hastened to hide them from my longing gaze, and put himself on the defensive, while his companions bound me more tightly.

Prudence came to my aid; I became again master of myself; and it was with the greatest calmness that I answered the further questions put to me by the interpreter, whose

tone and countenance were those of a man determined to be obeyed. I told them that I had quitted Europe because I was ambitious, and that in my country the extent of territory is so restricted, compared with its numerous population, as to make it extremely difficult for even a few individuals there to gain the means of living independent and in tolerable comfort; that money was the motive principle in all things in civilized countries, every one following some kind of industry for the purpose of amassing it as quickly as possible; that in like manner with myself hundreds of thousands of other Europeans voluntarily exiled themselves every year, in the hope of realizing wealth in a short time, some to secure themselves against want, others with the sole view of leading a life of gaiety and pleasure. Lastly I added that the hope of seeing fortune smile on me, and the ardent desire to be of service to my parents, had

been enough to make me quit the mother country.

After communicating my response to his companions, who burst out laughing and shrugged their shoulders with an air of disdainful commiseration, he replied that since fate had thrown me amongst them, all anxiety as to the future would be superfluous on my part; that there would be no necessity for me to work to eat, and that my family would have to do without me, as I should never return to them; that I should be happy in the midst of them, though, to tell the truth, they would not promise me either clothes or dwelling-place to protect me from the inclemencies of the season; that the ground, whether dry or wet, rocks or grass, would, by turns, be my bed; that in this kind of existence I should be as well off as themselves, as I appeared to be made like themselves; finally, that they would treat me well so long as I was useful and devoted to

them. To conclude the matter, he added by way of reflection, that Christians are block-heads (*ouèsalmas*), imbeciles (*pofos*), to work for gold and cover themselves from head to foot in inconvenient, extraordinary and doubtless unwholesome, garments, fabricated apparently with great trouble, to judge by the material.

During the eight days we were moving in a north-west direction, through a wooded country that appeared to me delightful compared with the spots I had hitherto lived in, I was continually the object of conversation among the Indians, who exhibited towards me a kindness to which I was little accustomed. The name of my country appeared to me to have reached their ears for the first time.

Some of their questions convinced me of their intelligence. They inquired with marks of the greatest interest as to the form of our government. Nothing, I confess, more as-

tonished and pleased me than hearing these creatures, who knew nothing of laws or fixed rules of civil government, by turns admire or laugh at our civilization, of which I traced so imperfect a picture for them.

I must say, to their honour, that I saw them astonished at our genius, and recant their first opinion, saying: “El-mey-ta-onignecaës-gné-onélay” (“After all, these Christians are not fools.”)

Among these Indians every family, and also every man, claims to be absolutely free. All live in complete independence; yet, in spite of these views and manner of living, the Poyuches, the Pampeans and the Mamouelches divide themselves, as well as the Patagonians, into a large number of tribes. Their frequent intestine wars in past times—those which they have sustained against their neighbours, as in the present day, those which they wage against the Hispano-Americans—have constantly endangered their liberty, and they

have learned from simple necessity to form themselves into more or less numerous societies. They choose chiefs or caciques, a sort of commanders, whom they regard rather as their fathers and directors than as masters, and with whom they stay, or from whom they separate themselves, as they please.

To be raised to the dignity of cacique, a man must have given striking proofs of his valour, and the more a cacique is famous for his exploits, the larger is his tribe. It is thus that in the present day the Pampeans and the Mamouelches, through having a great number of caciques, voluntarily appoint a privileged chief, Calfoucourah (Blue-stone). This name came to him from his having, in infancy, found a blue stone somewhat resembling the human form in shape, from which he is never separated: it is considered among the Indians as a precious talisman to which he owes his numerous successes.

Conversation was not the only distraction

which the grotesque language of my interpreter afforded me ; for during a great part of the journey we hunted, and I was fortunate enough to show some address in capturing with the lasso, or the boleadora, *youémes* (gamas), and *tchoïquets* (or nandous, the ostriches of these latitudes), this exhibition of skill appearing to make my new masters augur well of my future services, and inducing them to treat me with more consideration.

In proportion, however, as we approached the place where the horde resided, I saw, not without uneasiness, the regard of which I had been the object throughout the journey withdrawn from me. It was easy for me to find out, by the conversation of the Indians, that their manner of treating me had been a deception, practised for the purpose of engaging my attention sufficiently to keep me from thinking of escape ; but that, as soon as they were assured by the neighbourhood of their tribes, they did not care to take any

trouble to conceal their true intentions towards me. It was in this way that I acquired the melancholy certainty of not being better treated amongst them than I had been by the barbarous Poyuches, the proud Puelches, or the harsh Patagonians; for by one as much as the other I was considered as an enemy become their slave, that is to say, of a being over whom they had complete right of life and death.

The last words they addressed to me were counsels equivalent to threats, on the subject of my future conduct. They never tired of repeating to me, any more than my first masters had done, that I owed them deep gratitude for not having murdered me, since I was an *ouignecaë* (Christian), which all the Indians of this region considered a crime.

At length we arrived. It was time the journey was ended, for I was broken-down with fatigue, and in a sad condition, as may

easily be imagined, considering that this was the second journey only I had made on bony steeds, as bare of covering as myself, and going continually at a gallop under the burning sun.

My arrival in the midst of the horde was an unexpected event, and I became anew the object of general curiosity. To the children and women who surrounded me, succeeded a considerable influx of visitors eager to fix in their memory the features of the *ou'sah-ouignecaë* (bad Christian), in order, should it be needful, to oppose his flight. To the most important personages my master did not omit to repeat, with all sorts of amplifications, the account of the terrible struggle sustained by me and my companion against our numerous and ferocious assailants, the Poyuches. The indignation of each then seemed to pass all bounds, and very often, on leaving me, they addressed imprecations to me or made threatening gestures.

At the end of a few days passed in this manner, and when they considered that I was sufficiently known, they made me resume my function of guarding the herd. I was submitted to the most rigorous surveillance, continued night and day; I could not move a step without being accompanied; I was compelled to give an account of my melancholy and of my least gesture; during the night my short moments of sleep were still exposed to be broken, for the superstition of the Indians made them apprehensive of my evasion, and moved by this fear, they would suddenly spring upon me, wake me suddenly, and threaten me. At these trying moments I was often greatly terrified, which being always misinterpreted, was always followed by ill-treatment.

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CHAPTER III.

THE PAMPAS AND THE PAMPEANS.

THE variations of climate in the Pampas are most regular. It experiences a great difference of temperature between summer and winter. The latter season there is almost as cold as the month of December in France. There is no snow, however, but in the morning the ground is always covered with hoarfrost. Ice never becomes more than about an inch and a half thick. On the other hand, the heat of summer is overwhelming. At dawn the horizon forms a dark and dense line, lit slowly by the rising sun; the thick grass of these immense plains is then seen to give off a part of the beneficent morning dew, which, in evaporation, produces most

singular effects of mirage. The strength of the sun makes itself acutely felt in all living creatures. The horses and wild oxen, by which these plains are peopled, experience so much fatigue as to give themselves up, like the men, to a *siesta* that seems for all a rest as natural as necessary.

Throughout the Pampas, sensible differences of atmosphere are found. In the wooded regions of the Mamouelches, the air is more dry; and in creatures of whatever sort no appearance of perspiration is to be found. I have many times seen animals killed by heat lying on the arid plain, dried in their skins; but in the latitude of Buenos Ayres and of White Bay, in seventy and seventy-one degrees of latitude—regions in which the most beautiful lucern-grass imaginable abounds—vegetation clearly shows the moisture of the climate. The dews in these regions resemble rather fine rain or heavy mists. Dead animal flesh rapidly

decays there, and wounds are very difficult of cure. Will it be believed, however, that, in spite of this constant humidity, the Indians all sleep almost naked on the ground without ever being inconvenienced by it?

The Pampeans have no more fixed residence than the Puelches or the Patagonians. They wander from one spot to another, according as the grass is consumed by their cattle; but they never quit any spot without completing by fire the work of destruction commenced by the animals. The Pampeans formerly occupied the whole of the lands between the different provinces of Buenos Ayres, the Rio Colorado, and the Mamouelches, which still form their western and northern boundaries. However, they move but very short distances. They confine themselves principally to the north-north-west portion of the country, between the sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth degrees of longitude, and the thirty-third and thirty-eighth degrees

of latitude. It happens sometimes, however, that they become mixed for a brief space with the Mamouelches, or that they retreat to a greater distance, especially when they are apprehensive of some aggression. This alliance takes place principally on their return from the great expeditions, in which they give themselves up to the commission of the most atrocious cruelties.

It must be presumed that these barbarians have, like ourselves, though unknown to them, a conscience that speaks more powerfully than their will, for they are often so overtaken by terror that, for no other motive than a nightmare, they will take to sudden flight in the middle of the night, raising a cry of alarm, following one another like misled sheep, and frequently abandoning spots where but a few hours before they had considered themselves to be in the greatest security. These flights completely resemble routs, during which they leave behind them

on the road all the cattle they are unable to drive before them at a gallop. The spots on which their tents had been erected present a most disgusting aspect after their departure—veritable dog-kennels, on which are piled in heaps the bones of the animals they have devoured, fragments of rotting skins and tufts of wool, emitting a foetid stench. In the midst of all this nauseousness strut vultures and hawks, coolly seeking any remnants of putrid flesh yet remaining.

So great is the boldness of these birds, that I have often had a thousand difficulties to prevent them from taking their share of the animals brought down by the Indians and myself. I had not time to pick up my knife, nor even to turn my game over to finish skinning it, before these birds had taken their places on the carcase. Sometimes I amused myself by throwing bleeding morsels into the air, which they caught before they reached the ground. I have also seen

them establish themselves on the sore backs of horses or mules, and mangle them, in spite of the contortions of the distressed and furious victims, who, with close-laid ears and straining backs, reared and convulsively lashed their tails, to get rid of their tormentors.

Formerly the Pampeans were much more numerous than they now are, but they have been greatly weakened by their incessant wars with the Spaniards. Encouraged by the impunity with which they have carried on their sanguinary excursions, they give themselves up to these excursions almost constantly, and no longer fear to reside in the neighbourhood of the Argentine provinces, west of the Sierra Ventana. They are fond of this part of the country, both for its proximity to the Hispano-Americans, and for its incomparable fertility. They name it Pouanemapo, or the land of Pouane, one of their celebrated caciques, who was born

there, and died there valiantly in a night surprise by Rosas' gauchos. It appears certain that, used as the Indians were to bloody contests, they had never sustained one so furious and terrible as that of this fatal night; for brave and venturesome as they may be, they seem to be struck with stupor whenever the recollection of this defeat is evoked. Not one amongst them would dare to set foot in the country of Pouane, into which, they say, Houacouvou (God) has for ever forbidden them access on pain of death.

The stature of the Pampeans is inferior to that of the Puelches and to that of the Patagonians. With few exceptions, they do not average more than five feet eight to five feet nine in height. Of all the Indian tribes, they are the darkest in colour. They are a full brown olive, some of them nearly black. Their skin is very delicate on all parts of their bodies, and as soft and shining as satin.

They exhale a peculiar odour, which, though far less strong than that of negroes, is yet stronger than that of Europeans. Their skin becomes brighter and more oily under the action of the sun, as I easily convinced myself by touch.

The forehead of the Pampeans bulges slightly, but does not retreat; their face is flattened and long. In general, they have a short, flat nose; in some it is thin, long, and hooked, like the beak of a bird of prey. Their eyes are almost horizontal, but like the Eastern Patagonians, their habit of pulling out their eyebrows helps a good deal to give them this aspect. They have all, without exception, very prominent cheek-bones, very large and gaping mouths, and thick lips. Their teeth are like those of their neighbours, the Puelches and the Patagonians, that is to say small, very white, and beautifully even. Their beard comes very late; their hair is abundant, black as jet, and very

coarse. Some gather it up on the top of the head; others simply part it in two, and keep it in its place by means of a piece of cloth or a leathern thong; but in all their combats they allow it to float over their faces, so as not to see any danger that may threaten them.

The most regular types may now very often be found amongst the Pampeans; these are the children of Indians and captives. These Indians are distinguished by a degree of intelligence very superior to that of all the other nomads, the Araucanians always excepted. They station themselves by choice for several months together on the same spot. Their tents, like those of the Puelches, are made of leather, but they are more spacious and more regular. They exhibit a certain order of arrangement, and great cleanliness. These, however, do not prevent their being covered with vermin.

The type of the women is, in some

respects, more disagreeable than that of the men, whom they surpass in ugliness, as well as greatly resemble. They are big also, but yet not so big as one might imagine; there exists between their stature and that of men disproportions not to be found between the men and women of Europe; but these proportions are not sufficiently general to establish the difference. The tallest of these women was not much more than one metre fifty-four to fifty-five; some, however, reach the height of men, but the majority amongst them are smaller. They exercise their physical powers a great deal, handling the lasso and boleadora with considerable skill. Their shoulders are wide and square, enframing a protruding and ungraceful bosom; for they are accustomed to stretch their breasts as soon as they become mothers, to enable them, they say, to offer a greater quantity of milk to their infants. This usage is applied even to milch-cows. Very much sur-

prised at the custom, I resolved to satisfy myself as to its results ; I experimented on a young cow whose milk I measured before and after the operation. I became convinced of the truth of the fact. The limbs of the Pampeans are a little short, perhaps, compared with the trunk, but generally full and round.

The carriage of all Indian women is most ungraceful, more particularly that of the Pampeans, whom a certain sense of decency obliges to seat themselves differently from men, who squat in the Oriental manner, with their legs crossed under them. The women double up the left leg, the point of the foot resting on the ground, then they seat themselves on the heel, passing the right leg under the left thigh, taking care to place the one foot flat by the side of the other, so as to maintain in equilibrium the close-pressed legs. This fatiguing posture, to which they accustom

themselves from infancy, strains the left haunch in an extraordinary manner, turns the leg inwards, and causes them to limp on that side. They have small hands, well made, and rarely thin. Their joints, like those of the men, are delicate; their feet are small but wide. If their forms are not beautiful, they at least indicate great strength.

These savage women wrap themselves in a piece of woollen stuff, most often fabricated by themselves and artistically dyed. This vestment covers them from the shoulders to just above the knees—a sort of bag or sheath, without grace or art, out of which protrude their head, arms, and legs. It is fastened at the upper part by an enormous round silver brooch (*toupouh*), the flat and ill-formed face of which reminds one strongly of the bottom of a tin saucepan. About their hips, they wear a wide waistbelt of undressed leather, ornamented with designs in different colours, and with

the hair left on in parts, or very often with large beads arranged artistically, and sewed on with animal fibre. Their hair is separated into two very long plaits, which sometimes hang down to their heels, and to the ends of which they suspend copper or silver ornaments.

Some women content themselves with rolling their plaits about their heads in the form of a diadem, and tie them with bands of red or yellow wool two inches wide; all wear heavy square earrings, which hang down upon their shoulders.

The richest or highest in rank amongst them wear also a leathern collar three inches wide, and very solid, garnished on the outside with small metal knobs, which they make in the following manner:—In the first place, they beat into plates the metal which they are going to use; next they cut out small round pieces of equal size, and stamp them with two horse-bones, one being hol-

lowed, and serving for a matrix, the other formed as a plug. Each spangle is perforated with two small holes, to enable it to be sewn on to the leather. The width, and complete absence of suppleness of this singular ornament, which resembles a dog-collar, prevents any motion of the head, and gives a most comical expression of importance to the face of the wearer.

The youngest make for themselves ankle and wrist bracelets of many-coloured beads, which they wear constantly ; and on festival days, young and old wear in their hair a sort of cap or net, made of blue and white beads, which falls over their foreheads, covers their cheeks, and keeps their plaits apart.

The Pampean women are very active and very attentive to their husbands, submitting without murmuring to all their exactions. Their husbands generally employ in rest all the time not spent in hunting or in horse-

breaking. In changing residence, it is the women who take care of all that concerns the home in removing. They load the horses, saddling that of their husband first, then their own, on which they afterwards place themselves with three or four children. Thus equipped, they get the herd together and drive it before them with the spears of their lords and masters, who, mounted on their best horses, and carrying nothing but their lassos and boleadoras, devote themselves on the road to the pleasures of the chase, without appearing to take the least heed in the world of their families, however attached they may be to their children.

Arrived at the end of the journey, it is still the women who unload the horses, and as quickly as possible reinstate the tent, under which their husbands stretch themselves while food is being prepared for them. After having established order in the home, and taken lavish care of the children, they

spin wool and weave cloaks for the whole family, to rest themselves after the fatigues of the day. It is truly curious to see the ability and perfection which they display in these manufactures ; they have no other looms than those they make for themselves, which are formed like a frame, on the two parallel cross-pieces of which the web is tightly stretched. The threads intended to form the weft are wound on small pieces of pointed wood which serve for shuttles ; in place of the comb employed by our weavers, they use a small piece of notched wood. These tissues, in spite of the numerous imperfections of the tools possessed by these women, really do them great honour, for they will bear comparison with those produced by our manufacturers. They are always tastefully decorated with regular and original designs formed in wool of different colours. During my long sojourn with this tribe I saw several that were remarkable for

their fineness, but principally one, representing with rare perfection the portrait of General Urquiza, to whom it was offered, and who, not knowing in what other manner to express his admiration of this work of patience, covered it with gold pieces.

The Pampeans, to whom horse-exercise is obligatory, mostly spring at a bound into their saddles, which completely cover the backs and shoulders of their horses. Only the richest of them, or those who have been most fortunate in pillaging, saddle their horses in the manner of the gauchos.

The women ride in the same way as the men, but their saddles are totally different. They are in fact more like scaffolds, composed of seven or eight sheep-skins piled on the horse's back, and surmounted by two rolls of rush (*salmas*), covered with soft leather, painted red and black; the whole is solidly fixed by two girths of undressed leather. To get upon this apparatus, they

use a stirrup passed over the neck of the horse, in the form of a shoulder-belt.

The Pampeans take more pains in divesting themselves of hair than the Indians of any other tribe; they display also more coquetry in the art of tattooing themselves. Men and women help each other in this occupation as well as in freeing the body and head of the numerous insects by which they are assailed, and which they eat while taking their meals. These Indians possess kitchen utensils, such as cast-iron pots (*chaïas*), and iron spits (*cangnecaouëts*), the produce of robberies. They partly cook their food. The women, whose care it is, prepare meat in a manner altogether peculiar: they boil some water, into which they throw some pieces of meat; these, as soon as blanched, they serve up in wooden bowls, with a little of the savoury broth (*caldo*), highly salted, the whole operation taking less than a quarter of an hour to accomplish. I must add, however,

that I have seen well-roasted meat eaten ; but their natural instinct leads them to prefer their meat raw and bloody. They devour with delight the lungs (*carêtone*), the liver (*quèhs*), and the kidneys (*cousanoh*), all bleeding, and they drink blood hot or curdled.

The men are highly industrious and patient. Their skill exhibits itself in the making of harness, which is much sought after by the Hispano-Americans. The rich farmers and caballeros take a certain pride in tricking out their horses with these trappings. Their reins, their stirrup-cords, and saddle-girths are sometimes as supple and well plaited as objects made in hair amongst us. These articles, as well as the cloaks of guanaco-skin, the ostrich-feathers, and leather of all kinds, which they might readily exchange, would in themselves suffice to enrich the Pampeans if they were not so inconstant. The overtures for peace which they so frequently repeat are made with no other

view than to get tobacco, sugar, yerba, and strong liquors gratis. As soon as they see their store of provisions diminishing, they return anew to hostilities and recommence their terrible invasions, resulting in the ruin and death of large numbers of people.

In their expeditions the Indians spare old women no more than men; they murder all, with the exception of the young girls, whom they make their wives, privileged to some extent on the score of affection. Of the young children they make slaves, to whose care they confide their flocks, when they do not sell them to the Indians of distant tribes, either to the Mamouelches or to the Araucanians, who, in the annual visits, bring them roughly-made silver spurs and stirrups, in exchange for which they willingly sacrifice the greater part of their flocks, and even their captives. The Araucanians generally exchange their stirrups and spurs, the intrinsic value of which does not exceed

twenty or thirty piastres (four to six pounds sterling) against fifteen to sixteen oxen, which they sell at from twenty-five to thirty piastres each in Chili. As none of them ever venture to cross the Cordilleras without a certain number of these objects, besides a stock of indigo (*anil*), stuff for mantles (*pilquènes*), tools for tattooing, and beads of divers colours (*cuentas*), to exchange, it may be imagined what their riches must be, since they never go back to their own country without taking with them from three to four hundred horned cattle and a large number of horses, which they sell to equal advantage.

The Araucanians, though they have the same origin as the Patagonians, the Puelches, the Pampeans, and the Mamouelches, lead an existence materially different, forced upon them by the restriction of their territory, and the impossibility of overrunning the provinces of Chili, the frontiers of which are better

guarded than those of the Argentine Republic. Instead of living in the nomad state, like the Indians of the eastern coast, the Araucanians are grouped in villages, and inhabit wooden houses sufficiently large to contain several families. They are very ingenious and laborious. They cultivate maize (*ouah*) and wheat (*cévada*), also several kinds of vegetables—potatoes (*ponnieux*), onions (*céboyats*), haricots (*porotos*). They grow both sweet and water melons of great size, and almost as abundantly as apricots, plums, and crab-apples, on which they feast copiously. They generally eat their meat fried or roasted, *meurkeh*, or maize-flour baked on a grill, to which milk or horse-fat has been added. In spite of these appearances of civilization, they regale themselves with pleasure on raw liver and kidneys served up with clotted blood.

There are two groups of population, very distinct from each other, in Araucania,

generally designated in Chili, as well as in the province of Buenos Ayres, Upper and Lower Araucania.

The first is composed of Indians and Spaniards. It is well known that the Indians who compose it are easy and agreeable to deal with, that they like to mix their blood in marriage with that of Christians, which does not always prevent their living free of all yoke in the neighbourhood of Santiago, Construcccion, Nacimiento, Las Angles, and Talca, where they still sometimes throw themselves *en masse* into political dissensions. Good Indians as they are, they have preserved the taste for pillage. Nevertheless, they are very hospitable, and any one may fearlessly go amongst them. It is not the same in Lower Araucania, which is peopled by beings much more primitive, in whose eyes the Christian, of whatever nation he may be, is an enemy, against whom they cannot find too many means of exercising their ferocity.

Such are the Patagonians of Araucania, though separated from these last by the Cordilleras. They have the greatest repulsion to everything resembling civilization.

Woe to the poor Christians who fall into their hands, for to their families they may be reckoned as dead ! Among numerous examples which might be cited in support of this assertion, the following, from its authenticity, is unquestionable.

Sometime before his premature death had thrown the scientific world into mourning, Monsieur Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, who had honoured me with his friendship, told me that he considered as for ever lost to his family, one of his relatives, who had fallen into the hands of the Indians of Lower Araucania. While deploring this terrible misfortune, he told me how much he wished that his relative had been kept prisoner in Upper Araucania, whence it would have been easy to have rescued him.

Araucania, therefore, as well as Patagonia, has its dark legends.

As to the Pampeans, they are essentially hunters, and become, so to speak, more and more nomadic, from their habit of nourishing themselves on the flesh of their horses, during the long and rapid journeys they make. They never hesitate to travel five or six hundred leagues to devastate the Hispano-Americans. Extremely rich in flocks and herds, these Indians might easily do without hunting ; but as it is a great diversion to them, they pursue it all the year, with most ardour, however, during the months of August and September, the spring time of the southern hemisphere. At this season they make an ample provision of young game, of which they are extremely fond, or of partridge and ostrich-eggs. They are very clever at catching young gamas alive, with which they amuse the children, to whom also they give partridge-eggs for nourishment ; while those of

the ostrich, which are less delicate, are eaten in common by the family. They break them in the same way as ourselves, in making "eggs in the shell," and cook them by placing them upright in the dung embers, taking care to mix the yolk and the white during the progress of the cooking. These eggs are always found in great numbers. The Indians eat only those that are even in number, and turn up their noses at the others, which they maintain have not been fecundated.*

To hunt the ostrich and the gama, the Indians assemble in great numbers, under the direction of a cacique who fills the functions of chief huntsman. He despatches the hunters in parties in different directions, so as to surround a space of two or three leagues; each of these, on reaching the place assigned to it, burns, as a signal, some dry grass. When all are at their posts, at a new signal given by the chief, they spread themselves in

* Note E.

a line, and move slowly towards the centre of the circle formed by themselves, until the distance between each becomes not more than seven or eight horse-lengths. They then stop, their *locayos* (boleadoras) in hand. In obedience to their cries, numerous wild dogs, which accompany them, spring forward to harass the surrounded ostriches and gamas. Closely followed and often bitten, these animals try to escape through the narrow openings left between the hunters for the purpose of enabling them to cast a multitude of balls, which rarely miss their mark. The captured animals are skinned with incredible dexterity, giving to the hunters the opportunity of continuing the exercise until the contracting circle brings the crowd of Indians together. The hunters very rarely return to their families without having taken seven or eight head of game, the blood of which they drink with delight, and is the only nutriment they take

during the hunt, which lasts two-thirds of a day.

After the hunt the skins of the divers animals killed are stretched out on the ground by the aid of bone pegs. As soon as they are dry they are salted, to preserve the fur from injury. They are kept by the Indians, as well as the ostrich feathers, to be exchanged, at the first opportunity, for sugar, yerba, tobacco, and alcoholic liquors, of which they are very fond.

The Indian population tends to decrease every year; but this decay falls more particularly on the Pampeans and the northern tribes, among whom the women are a minority, in consequence of the terrible wars made on them by the gauchos of Rosas, as I have already said. On many occasions the Indians were put to flight, and took refuge in the lower chain of the Cordilleras nearest to Chili, in the neighbourhood of the Araucanians. Their wives having no homes, and

seeing themselves every moment in danger of being captured by the Argentines, abandoned their husbands, and fled into Araucania. The small number of them who had the courage to remain faithful to their husbands the Pampeans, whose present state is that of warfare against the Spaniards, was very far from sufficient when they returned to inhabit their old track of country. And, in spite of the great number of women they have since captured, and daily carry off, at most there is not more than one to four or five men.

Among the Araucanians, on the contrary, the number of the women is much larger than that of the men. The manners of the Indians permitting them to possess several wives, some of the men have five or six, and the Grand Cacique, Calfoucourah, with whom I lived, has as many as thirty-two. It results from this disproportion of numbers between the sexes, that most of the Indians, too poor

to possess the luxury of a companion, are compelled to remain single. They have no intimacies but with those who are free, and who may without reproach grant them their favours. One cannot but be a little surprised to know that, in spite of this strange custom, once married, the women become faithful to their husbands, and very attentive to their home duties.

Amongst all the peoples whose principal traits I am recalling, marriage is considered, quite as much as among ourselves, an important act, the source of a respectable and happy life. It is effected in the form of traffic, or the exchange of divers objects and animals against a woman.

An Indian is always satisfied when he meets with a future wife on the eve of becoming a mother. The parents part with their daughter only to the richest and most generous purchaser.

When an Indian is desirous of contracting

a union, and has cast his eyes on some girl of the neighbourhood, he visits in turn all her relatives and friends; he imparts to them his desire, and begs them to lend him their assistance in carrying his project to a favourable issue. They each, according to their position as relatives or friends, give him their advice and approbation in a very long discourse appropriate to the circumstances, and help him with some kind of gift. These presents generally consist of horses, silver stirrups or spurs, and a few pieces of cloth, the product of their pillages.

At a meeting which takes place before the celebration of the marriage, the relatives and friends of the future wife fix the day when the demand for her hand shall be made. The night before the day fixed on, they all put on their handsomest ornaments, and go to the suitor's, with the view of secretly posting themselves in proximity to the dwelling of the coveted girl, so as to be able, as soon as

daylight appears, to surround her parents, and make the demand for her hand in terms the most pressing, touching, and poetical; they refrain from mentioning the name of the suitor until the moment when they see a chance of success. During this time the future spouse remains out of sight with all his presents, according to the rules of decorum. After a very long enumeration of the qualities of their daughter—an ocular though invisible witness of this ceremony, and who is obliged to shed abundant tears—the parents do not fail to exhibit great repugnance and pain at separating themselves from their child; they end by consulting her wishes, reserving the right of accepting or refusing the overture which is being made to them, in case it should not prove sufficiently advantageous. At this moment the suitor arrives, and the sight of the presents intended for them nearly always secures the consent of these avaricious creatures, and

their arrogant pride disappears under a suppressed smile of satisfaction. The rest of the day is spent in company, each member of the family hastily carrying off whatever present he has received. A young fat mare, given and sacrificed by the bridegroom, prepared by all the women, and served by the bride, furnishes a succulent banquet, washed down by numerous libations of water. None of the guests are on any account permitted to absent themselves during the continuance of this feast, at the end of which nothing of the devoured animal must be left but the skin and bones. The latter, well gnawed, are collected by the parents of the married couple, and buried by them in a chosen spot, as an evidence, and in remembrance of, the union which, from that moment, is considered consecrated.

After this obligatory ceremony, the whole assembly accompanies the newly-married pair in great pomp to their home, where a repe-

tition of the feast of the morning takes place. The young woman's parents, bringing with them the skin of the mare devoured in the morning, speedily arrive at the dwelling of their son-in-law, hand it to the young housekeeper, and assist him to construct a shelter.

During the following days, a crowd of visitors, drawn by curiosity, present themselves in the home of the young couple, and congratulate them mutually on their happy choice. Each one makes pressing inquiries of the woman as to the qualities or defects of her husband, and of him as to those of his better-half. Their questions take a wide range, and are incredibly indiscreet, apparently without being found in the least indelicate. On the contrary, the young married people seem flattered by this evidence of interest. The Indians are very deceitful; thus, the wife, as much for motives of policy as to acquire the reputation of being good

and amiable, herself hands to all her visitors meat, water, or tobacco, addressing to them, while doing so, a few polite and flattering words, garnished with a gay smile, and doing the same even to her enemies, when she has any.

If it happens that the husband and wife cannot sympathize after a cohabitation more or less long, they separate amicably, the parents making no difficulties in restoring the objects they received from the husband, who, out of generosity, always leaves them a portion as compensation for the prejudice he may have occasioned, by separating them from their daughter, and by sending her back to them without children. She may then be again asked in marriage, and contract a new union.

It is the habit of the Indians to be extremely severe with their wives in the early portion of their marriage; some push this to the extent of actual cruelty, striking

them with their boleadoras, to make them, they say, humble and submissive. The wife must respect and extol all the acts of her husband, and keep silent when he speaks. Some wives, however, refuse to submit to this humiliation, and continually draw down ill-treatment upon themselves. The boldest of them free themselves from such violence by sudden separation. They complain to their parents, who arm themselves and take her back by main force, which becomes the source of implacable hatred on both sides; for the husband not only loses his wife, but two-thirds of what he has given to obtain her is retained.

When the ill-treatment inflicted by the Indian on his wife is based on her infidelity, the man preserves all his rights and authority; he can put her and her accomplice to death, but, being generally very avaricious, he prefers to retain his wife and ransom the delinquent, who has the right of

purchasing his life when his means permit of his doing so ; but it often happens—I have myself been a witness of it—that, without rhyme or reason, the accusation has been made on the ground of calculation and avarice, from the entanglements of which the accused has not been able in any way to extricate himself.

From the moment the husband has received satisfaction, he is forbidden to address to his wife any remark on the subject of her illicit conduct ; he would expose himself to the reproaches of her family, in case he further ill-used her on that account.

When an Indian, moved by the desire of contracting a union, fails in his project, those who have accompanied him make his cause their own, and abuse the family which has declined their overtures. Very often these wrangles result in a frightful *melée*.

The Indians never spare their wives any

labour, even during the latest period of their pregnancy; they are to be seen ceaselessly occupied with one thing or another up to the very moment of their deliverance, which takes place with surprising facility—a facility with which they have been endowed by that divine Providence which takes care of the most wretched. When they feel their child about to come into the world, they go to the water-side, and bathe themselves and it as soon as it has seen the day. They never require assistance in these circumstances, so difficult for European women; but as soon as they are delivered, continue the course of their daily occupations without any illness ever resulting from such treatment.

Among these almost primitive creatures, children are not nearly so numerous as might be imagined, for the existence of the new-born infant is submitted to the judgment of the father and mother, who decide on its life or death.

Their superstition makes them regard as divinities all phenomenal children, principally such as are born with a larger number of fingers or toes than is natural to them. According to their belief, it is a presage of great happiness for their family. As to those that are altogether deformed—such cases are very rare—or whose constitution does not appear to fit them for the kind of life they would have to lead, they make away with them, either by breaking their limbs or smothering them; they then carry them to a distance and abandon them, without burial, to the wild dogs and birds of prey. If the innocent little creature is considered worthy to live, it becomes from that instant the object of the whole love of its parents, who, if necessary, will submit themselves to the greatest privations to satisfy its least wants or exactions. They place their new-born on a small ladder, which serves it instead of a cradle. The upper

portion of its little body rests on the cross-pieces or rounds ranged close together, and covered with a sheep-skin, while the lower part is enclosed in a sort of hollow formed by other cross-pieces below the uprights. The child is held in this position by soft cords wound above the skins which serve it instead of linen.

The length of the cradle exceeds that of the infant by about a foot at either extremity. To the four corners other cords are attached, serving to suspend it horizontally during the night above the father and mother, who, by means of another cord, are enabled to rock the little creature without disturbing themselves. Every morning these infants are set at liberty for as long as is required to attend to their cleanliness; or often, when the sun shines, their mothers lay them out on a sheep-skin, that they may gain the strength and vigour communicated to them by that benignant luminary. When it rains, or when

it is cold, they remain swaddled in the interior of the *roukah*; they are placed upright, their backs against one of the supports of the tent, the same as a ladder rested against a wall. Their mothers remain in front of them, ceaselessly looking at them, and frequently giving them the breast, or often small pieces of bloody meat to suck.

The women suckle their children up to three years of age: if they have others during this time, they nevertheless continue to nourish them, without either themselves or the children suffering in any way. The least caprices of these little creatures are laws for their relations and friends, who, following the example of the parents, submit to all their wishes. Scarcely have these infants begun to crawl on their hands, than knives and other weapons are left within their reach, which they unhesitatingly use to strike whoever displeases them, to the great satisfaction of their parents, who, in this

infant anger, see with satisfaction the precocious germ of qualities intended to make a good enemy to Christianity.

The only illnesses to which these infants are subject are pains in the limbs and a kind of croup. The pains are treated with warm and cold douches. The remedy employed by the Indians for the cure of croup is extremely violent: it consists of a mixture of urine putrified in the sun, forming a sort of alkali, and gunpowder, carried off in some pillage; or, in default of gunpowder, the alkali alone. Not more than a spoonful is ever given to the child. The effect of this violent remedy immediately shows itself in the form of vomiting, and the cure is generally complete at the end of a few hours. Sometimes I have seen children suddenly covered with a rash, that smarted and itched so unbearably as to make them utter loud cries and shed tears abundantly. The mothers in these cases hastened to rub the parts with the

hot ashes of cow-dung, moistening their bodies from time to time with water that had been held in the mouth. Judging by the restless anxiety displayed by the Indian women while treating their children in this manner, I am inclined to think that they greatly feared the consequences of these eruptions, which, in fact, strongly resembled small-pox.

At four years old, for the Indians reckon by years, from one winter or one spring to another, they submit their offspring, both boys and girls, to the ceremony of piercing their ears, which marks the same event in their lives as baptism does with us. This ceremony is performed as follows:—The father makes a present to his child of a brown-red horse, more or less spirited, according to the sex of the child. This horse is thrown down upon the ground, the feet strongly tied, in the midst of numerous guests in holiday costume, in the front rank of whom

figure all the relatives. The child, whose whole body has been ornamented with strange paintings, is laid upon the horse, its head towards the east, either by the head of the family or by the cacique of the tribe, when he chooses to honour the occasion with his presence. The women, placed in the second rank, intone a squalling and monotonous chant, each strophe ending in a dull and grave tone, intended to implore the protection of God. During this time the operation of boring the ears is effected with a well-sharpened ostrich-bone. In each hole the person presiding at the festival places a piece of metal of sufficient weight to enlarge the aperture and lengthen the ear. After which, armed with the same ostrich-bone, he makes an incision in the first joint of the right hand, or in the right ham, of each person taking part in the ceremony. The blood which flows from the wound is offered to *Houacouvou*,—the God controlling

the Evil Spirits,—to conjure him to accord a happy and long life to the newly elect. After which, as is the custom in all their ceremonies, a fat mare furnishes the fare offered to the assembled guests. The rib-bones are by preference given to the nearest or most intimate, who, after thoroughly picking them, place them at the feet of the child, in this manner pledging themselves to make it a present of some kind with the shortest delay. The presents consist of horses, oxen, cattle, spurs and stirrups of silver, which constitute a dowry.

The serious education of the children begins shortly after the ceremony of piercing their ears. On attaining their fifth year they mount by themselves on horseback, holding on by the mane and resting their little feet by turns on the joints of the right leg of their steeds. What mostly happens is, that the horses dart off like lightning, before the riders have time to settle themselves in

their places. At this age the children become very useful in guarding the cattle. They very quickly become experts in the art of throwing the lasso and boleadora ; next they learn to handle the lance and the sling. So that, at ten or eleven years of age, a time at which they have certainly more manly appearance and strength than a European at twenty or five-and-twenty, their education being complete, they take part in the excursions of the tribes and participate in their razzias, in which they generally display incredible temerity and audacity.

Some wives follow their husbands in these distant expeditions, notably those of the caciques. The part they play consists in collecting, with the assistance of their children, the scattered flocks, and driving them rapidly away, while the horde is engaged in fighting with the soldiers or with the farmers.

No one can imagine what skill and

bravery the Indians exhibit under these circumstances, though furnished with none but the most primitive arms. They never fall back before an army of regular troops; the fire of musketry, or even of cannon, does not always suffice to repulse them in their attacks. They move on horseback with so much ease and promptitude, that often, when it has been supposed that they have been overcome by wounds, persons have been astonished to see them advance again, more threateningly than ever, darting their lances with extraordinary velocity and skill. When engaged with the Spanish cavalry, they express their joy by raising ferocious and terrifying cries. They often drive before them unbroken horses, to the tails of which they tie strips of dry leather or wisps of lighted grass, which fill them with terror, very speedily communicated to the horses of the soldiers, on whom they descend like a terrible storm. Taking advantage of the disorder thus caused, the

Indians rush headlong upon the broken squadrons, and there ensues a bloody carnage. As to the infantry, for which they care very little—the Argentine soldiers firing so badly as almost to appear as if they were afraid of their fire-arms—they attack them only when compelled to do so, and speedily overcome them.

When any of the Indians fall while fighting, they are picked up by their companions, who convey them to their homes, attending to them carefully on the way. If they die during the journey, they are buried without ceremony; but those who die in their tents, in the midst of their families, are interred with pomp.

In whatever manner an Indian may have quitted the world, the others refuse to believe in his death. They pretend that, tired of always living on this earth, their companion, desiring to visit other regions, known only to himself, has abandoned them solely for that

purpose. They dress him in his most beautiful ornaments and lay him on the skin that has served to give him shelter. On either side of him they place his weapons and most valuable objects, after which they wrap the skin about him and bind it tightly round, at short intervals, with his own lasso. This sort of mummy they place upon the back of his favourite horse, having previously broken its left fore-leg, so that by its enforced genuflexions it may add to the melancholy effect of the ceremony. All the women of the tribe gather about the widows of the defunct, uttering lamentable cries and weeping together, pausing every now and then to sing a song appropriate to the occasion, in which the departed is first eulogized, then bitterly reproached for his ingratitude, in abandoning his wives, children, and friends. The men, downcast and silent, their hands and faces painted black, with two large white spots below the eyelids, escort the body on horse-

back to the nearest eminence, on the summit of which they dig a shallow grave. As soon as the body is covered with the earth, they slaughter on the very spot, the horse which has borne the remains of his master, and several others; also a few sheep, destined, according to their superstitious belief, to furnish the defunct with food during the long journey he will have to make before he reaches the place to which he has taken his way.

The objects of least value left by the departed are burned, with a view of effacing all recollection of him. The women, after having for several consecutive days given marks of the profoundest sorrow, by striking themselves on the head with their fists and tearing their hair, accompany the widows to the dwelling-places of their respective parents, where they are bound to remain more than a year without contracting any *liaison* or other union, under pain of death to them and their

accomplices. To this usage they scrupulously conform.

It may easily be understood that, for a slave as I was, it was not a matter of days, nor even of months, to collect the divers observations I am now bringing under the eye of the reader.

Fallen, as I have described, into the hands of the Poyuches, after having first been carried into the cold, wild, and sterile plains of the south, where the tempestuous winds and sudden changes of the atmosphere—inherent characteristics of the polar extremities of great continents,—manifest themselves with greater violence perhaps than on any other peninsular spot on the globe. After several months, sold by my first master to a second, then to a third, as I have shown, from sale to sale, from tribe to tribe, I had insensibly been carried northwards on this side of the Colorado. Change of place afforded me neither change of condition nor

of occupation. The days moved slowly and sadly, and, in the midst of the Pampas, my sufferings were increased by the ceaseless watchfulness to which I was subjected, to such a degree that my position became truly unendurable.

If during the course of the fine season the splendid appearance of the fertile Pampas, and the variety of my occupations sometimes became the source of unhopd-for relief, very soon, alas! the return of winter brought back to the vast plains, then become bare and white with frost, the saddest and most desolate aspect. In the daytime the immense solitude by which I was surrounded was scarcely ever disturbed but by the sharp cries of some bird of prey fighting over a putrified corpse, disputing it with wild dogs, or more often by some scattered herd, or some parties of nomads, easily recognizable by their long spears ornamented with nandou feathers. But with night came the plaintive

and prolonged howlings of thousands of wandering dogs, the roaring of the famished puma and jaguar, repeated from afar by numerous echoes, which, with the dull bellowing of the icy Pampero, formed the sole and lugubrious harmony of the Pampas.

Long as I had been a captive, I could not adapt myself to the life of slavery which had been imposed on me. I had direct masters, yet everybody who met me had the right to command me. I owed the most entire submission even to the children, who took pleasure in treating me with all kinds of cruelty. They flung stones at me with their slings, they cast their boleadoras about my body at the risk of wounding me ; often, when they were on horseback, they would catch me with the lasso by one of my limbs, and amuse themselves by dragging me after their galloping horses—all this to the great satisfaction of their parents, who cared very little for the sad condition in which I was

left by these sanguinary sports. When the Indians approached me in a well-disposed state of mind, they amused themselves, out of mere gaiety, by smearing my face with blood, or with whatever happened to come first to hand; sometimes they seized me by the hair and dragged me about until the pain forced me to call out, or until a portion was left in their hands. After this amusement, which was common amongst them, my head was often, for several days together, so swollen and painful that I could not bear to touch even my hair. The obligation I was under of smiling with a look of contentment and pleasure, on pain of being longer martyred in this manner, sometimes brought on fits of rage, that might have had dangerous consequences for myself. The women, among one another, or with the men, indulge in this refined practice without damage to their hair, which perfectly resists these rough assaults.

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CHAPTER IV.

OF THE RELIGION OF THE INDIANS.

As I have already had occasion to say, the belief of all these savages dignified by the name of Indians, is identical. They recognize two gods, or superior beings, one of good, the other of evil. They acknowledge and respect the power of the good, Vita Ouènetrou (the Great Man), whom they consider as the creator of all things. They have no idea of the place where he resides; they only maintain that the sun, which they look upon as his representative, is sent to examine what is passing amongst them, as well as to warm their limbs, benumbed during the winter, and to help the beneficent mists which in the spring cause the growth of the

magnificent carpet of verdure, in the midst of which their flocks and herds gambol and multiply. The moon, another representative, is, according to their belief, of no other use than to watch over and light them. They are persuaded that there are as many suns and moons as there are countries and lands on the globe.

The God of Evil (*Houacouvou*) it is, they say, who, in answer to their daily prayers, roams about the country inhabited by them, to drive away all witchcraft, and keep the evil spirits in subjection. They refer to him most often under the name of *Gualitchou* (the cause of all human ills). Among them also are to be found soothsayers of both sexes, who preside over the future, and whose vocation is announced by a kind of epileptic attack produced by the use of a certain plant, the secret of which they religiously preserve. They do not, like those of old, affect to be able to see into the bowels of the earth; for

several of them have been massacred for having predicted to chiefs events that have not come to pass.

Neither priest nor fetishes are found amongst the Patagonians, Puelches, and Pampeans. The fathers and mothers themselves transmit their religion to their descendants, who scrupulously observe it. This fact is the more extraordinary, because, among the Kitchois and the Bolivians, their neighbours, are found idols, and undoubted proofs of an interesting religion of very ancient origin.

Finally, whatever may be the simplicity of their religion, the belief in it of the Patagonians is not the less profound, and of this they every instant give proofs. An Indian never eats or drinks without having first prayed God to grant him all things necessary to his life, nor without offering him the first portion; he turns towards the sun, sent by God, when in the act of cutting off a piece of meat, or pouring out a little water, accompanying

the action with the following words, the formula being sometimes very slightly varied :—

“ Oh ! chachai, vita ouènetrou, reyne mapo, Frénéan votrey, fille aneteux, comè que hiloto, comè que ptoco, comè que omaotu. Povrè lagan intché, hiloto èlaemy ? tefa quinié ouésah. Hilo, hiloto tuffignay.

(Oh, father, Great man, king of this land, favour me, dear friend, every day with good food, with good water, with good sleep. I am poor, are you hungry ? here is a bad meal. Eat if you like.)

Though rarely able to procure tobacco, the Indians are, nevertheless, great smokers, for they know how to make the most of what they happen to seize in their successful razzias. After every meal, as well as on waking in the morning, and the last thing before going to sleep at night, they indulge in this pleasure.

In every roukah, among the indispensable articles, is found a pipe (*quitrah*) of their own making, the form of which is of one fixed

pattern for all. It is most often made out of a red or blue stone from the chain of the Andes, cut in the shape of a very narrow parallelogram, about ten centimetres long, surmounted by a projection in the form of an inverted cone, very skilfully hollowed out with a knife to one-half of the thickness of the slab, bowl and slab forming but one piece. Through one end, serving instead of a stem, they bore another hole of small diameter, ending almost in nothing at its junction with the bowl of the pipe. This simple but curious utensil is generally enriched with ornaments made out of pieces of silver or copper, fixed with rosin.

The Indians never smoke tobacco alone; they mix it with dry horse or ox-dung. The pipe being filled, the smokers lie down on their stomachs, and take by turn seven or eight whiffs one after the other, and only let the smoke escape from their nostrils when, half suffocated, they feel the impossibility of

retaining it any longer. The effect of this execrable internal fumigation makes them frightful to look upon, for their eyes turn three-quarters round, so that only the whites are left visible, and dilate to such a degree as to make one believe them about to start from their sockets. The pipe, which they are no longer able to hold, escapes from their thick lips, their strength leaves them, they are seized with a convulsive trembling, and plunged into intoxication bordering on ecstasy. They snort noisily, while saliva flows copiously from their half-open lips, and their feet and hands move like those of a dog swimming.

This horrible and repulsive state of voluntary besotment is delightful to them, and the object of respectful sympathy to all; no one would think of disturbing smokers during their intoxication, and would consider it an insult to laugh at them, or even to address a word to them. Their friends hasten

to bring water in a cow-horn (*motah*), which they silently plant in the ground alongside of them.

Their God, as usual, participates in this recreation, for to him, in the first place, have been offered three or four small puffs, accompanied by a mental prayer.

After having swallowed at a draught the water contained in the *motah*, the smokers, still under the influence of their recent exhaustion, and not being able to move either their arms or their legs, turn themselves on their backs, and give themselves up to the pleasures of sleep.

Women, and even children, take part in this indulgence without any one thinking of opposing it.

Amongst the smokers of the European nations, many contract the habit of absorbing the major part of their smoke, and may not be able to understand how it is that the Indians experience the effects above de-

scribed: the cause is attributable to the mixture of tobacco with odoriferous herbs, which, though turned into dung, yet retain all their strength.

CHAPTER V.

MEDICINE AMONGST THE INDIANS.

INDIVIDUALS specially practising medicine are not found among the Indians, because they have not sufficient confidence in their fellow-creatures, however closely they may be bound by ties of friendship or relationship; and further, because foreseeing Nature has gifted them with enough of intelligence and instinct to enable them successfully to apply to themselves different remedies which she has placed within their reach.

It is not uncommon amongst them to see children searching for simples necessary for their own cure. They are their own doctors. I have often observed them exhibit a certain amount of anatomical knowledge, both in

the manner of cutting up animals, and in the dressing of serious wounds; such as fractures of the arms or legs. So inured are they to suffering, that even in these grave cases they scarcely ever utter a sound of distress. They dress their own wounds with the greatest coolness. If they have a broken leg, they stretch themselves flat upon the ground, so that the limb may have something to rest upon. They replace the bones; then, with keenly-sharpened stones, they make a certain number of long and deep incisions in the neighbourhood of the fracture, and on the fracture itself; afterwards they apply a sort of poultice, composed of fresh herbs, beaten between two stones, and moistened with putrefied urine, which they are never without, and which serves them instead of alkalis; finally, they bandage themselves with water-rushes, and remain for a fortnight or three weeks only without movement. At the end of that time they begin to walk; sometimes

they even mount on horseback. The properties of the herbs they employ are such that even in the greatest heat gangrene never ensues; and if the fracture has not been perfectly clean, the small splinters of bone pass of themselves through the incisions, without causing any additional suffering to the patient, whose complete cure is only retarded for a few days. During all the time necessary to his re-establishment, the wounded man eats as heartily and as frequently as if he were in his ordinary state.

The Indians, as well as their children, are very subject to pains in their marrow, but they treat themselves more mercilessly. They puncture themselves with a *cataouet* (an ostrich bone in the form of a punch), several times, drawing as much blood as possible from the wounds, or else placing upon them little cone-shaped balls, made of cottony matter furnished by the palm-tree, to which they set fire. In the same manner they often

mark themselves on the fore-arms, the size and number of the marks serving amongst themselves to distinguish different tribes.

The Indians are frequently subject to violent pains in the head; but they are able to cure them almost as soon as they come on, by the immediate application of a steeped herb, the scent of which recalls that of the black-currant leaf. The effect of it is almost instantaneous. When this remedy does not suffice—a rare case—they puncture the part affected, and according to the nature of the blood which flows, form a crowd of conjectures as to their health, which, by their own account, is always in a bad state.

When they have taken a cold, or are seized with difficulty of breathing, the Indians use a root very common in their country, and which, for its numerous properties, merits some notice. They call it *Gnimegnime*, or treacherous tickler. Its form

closely resembles dog-grass, but is much longer and more regular, not presenting like the latter an infinity of little broken lines. Its outer skin is of a clear brown, but it is white in the interior ; it preserves none of its elasticity when dried ; on the contrary, it breaks easily. The plant, which is not remarkable in any way, and of which the Indians make no use, not having discovered any valuable properties in it, is generally from fifteen to twenty centimetres high ; its long and narrow leaves are dark green ; the stem is surmounted by a small yellow flower. A single strip of this root, of the size of a pin, bruised between the teeth and mixed with saliva, super-excites the functions of the respiratory organs, and at once matures the cold, leaving on the palate an acidulated taste, which makes the gums rough, the tongue and throat to itch intolerably, and producing a pain in the salival glands, the action of which it increases beyond measure. As soon

as the acid portion is completely absorbed, an improvement is felt throughout the body, and an agreeable freshness in the throat; the lungs seem set free and the patient breathes easily. However, this remedy, like many others, becomes dangerous when carelessly employed. The Indians have assured me that a small pinch is sufficient to produce death with the most horrible sufferings. I believe this, for wishing to try its effect upon myself, I swallowed the juice of a small portion of this root, which produced an indescribable itching in my mouth and throat; my respiration became so short and hurried that, not being able to inhale the air, the presence of which put me to torment, I was nearly suffocated. I feel certain that any one would be painfully asphyxiated who exceeded the regulated dose. It was only by refraining from drinking, and by holding my breath, as the Indians themselves do, that I succeeded in neutralizing the effects of this violent remedy.

The Indians employ this root in different ways in different cases, for themselves as well as for animals. For disorders of the eyes they employ only the juice. They use it equally to destroy the vermin that attack the sores of their horses or other cattle, as frequently happens in the wooded districts where flies abound. They reduce it to an almost impalpable powder, and mix it with the burned leaves of a small shrub, which they call *tchilpet*; of this mixture they make a paste, moistened with urine, which they introduce into the sore, having first extirpated one and all of the maggots with the aid of a pointed stick, and after having washed the place several times with putrefied urine. A few repetitions of this operation suffices to effect a speedy cure. I treated with success in this manner many horses confided to my care, that had pricked themselves with thorns, the wounds, on the following day, having become as large as my hand. The Indians

were pleased with me for taking this care, which I repeated daily, and without which a sensible diminution of their herds would have taken place; for they are so idle and careless, that every wounded animal becomes, in two or three days at most, the victim of gnawing insects.

The Indians live mostly on raw meat; from this cause, their blood is over-heated, and as they frequently sleep upon the damp ground, they have, nearly all of them, tumorous eruptions in the form of boils, from which they suffer greatly. They provoke the maturity of these abscesses by the application of poultices of hot animal dung. When these boils have reached their full development, they draw out the core by the aid of a doubled hair and swallow it between two mouthfuls of meat, pretending, in this way, to prevent relapse. Is it not truly disgusting to find such close resemblances between human beings and dogs,

who have no other organ to help themselves with but the tongue ?

When the Indians are seized by maladies against which their remedies are ineffectual, they attribute their gravity to the malignity of some evil genius (*qualiche*), who, escaping the vigilance of Houacouvou (the God of Evil), has taken refuge in the body of the patient. For the purpose of dislodging it, they assemble in great numbers, unknown to the sick man, and suddenly, armed with their lances, throw themselves upon the *roukah* in which he is lying, striking the skins with all their might, and uttering cries of rage, mixed with invocations. After which they penetrate into the interior, making a passage for themselves through the skins, and following each other in single file at full speed, their lances pointed at the sick man, whom the first to enter has dragged into the middle of the cabin. The unfortunate patient is generally filled with terror, and mostly sinks

under this violent shock to his nerves. Sometimes, when the patient is young, and recovers, he partakes of everybody's opinion, and attributes to witchcraft the derangement of his health, and his cure to the unexpected assault made on him by his companions. He is always overwhelmed with questions, which he answers with solemnity, and at great length. I cannot say that he abuses the credulity of his friends, because he only gives expression to his superstitious belief. I was myself one of the principal actors in such a scene, in which, I afterwards learned, I had involuntarily played the part of miracle-worker, according to their ideas, in spite of my being a Christian. I must, indeed, have been a very good *ouignecaë* (Christian), they said, to have succeeded so well.

The Indians possess several kinds of slow poison, of which they know, and learn perfectly how, to neutralize the effects. It is the women who make use of them; they

employ them both against their personal enemies and against those of their families. Jealousy is a source of implacable hatred to them; it is therefore amongst themselves that poison is most frequently used. Two women jealous of each other take the greatest care not to unmask the feeling before anybody, and from the moment they look upon one another as enemies, they court one another's visits with the intention of mutually poisoning each other. This kind of duel sometimes goes on for a long time, but one or other always succumbs at last. Her enemy, after having taken all measures necessary to do away with every trace of the poison she had used, from her tent, is one of the first to bemoan the fate of the defunct, of whom she speaks to all in terms of praise. With the view of guarding themselves against accusation—for no accusing proof is ever forthcoming against them—they always act without accomplices.

The Indians are in the habit of making a *post-mortem* examination of the bodies of all whose death, whether it has been slow or sudden, appears to them a matter of doubt, seeking to solve the problem by carefully searching the whole of the œsophagus, the kidneys, and the gall, in which they readily recognize the trace of morbid action when the subject has died of poison. When they have thus acquired the proof that one belonging to them has been the victim of vengeance, they employ all imaginable stratagems to discover the author of the crime. Woe to the known enemies of the deceased, for, though innocent, general opinion will quickly accuse them, and the relatives of the victim will put them to death if they do not agree to pay a heavy ransom.

With very rare exceptions at least, the accused, whether guilty or not, deny with the utmost energy the accusation brought against them; they prefer to fall with arms

in their hands, defending themselves to the death, rather than confess their guilt. The small number of those who make no resistance, and who confess, are taken under good escort before the head cacique, who fixes the price of their ransom, the importance of which is always proportioned to the rank of the deceased, for, amongst them, as amongst ourselves, there are different grades of society.

CHAPTER VI.

FATTENING OF HORSES—SLAUGHTERING A HORSE
—PRINCIPAL FOOD OF THE INDIANS DURING
THE FINE SEASON—ARMADILLOS—A TRAGIC
EVENT.

THE Indians, who are great amateurs of horses, principally esteem such as have served them in some razzia. These unfortunate animals, tried by fatigue and privations, are, to the despair of their masters, always very thin on their return from these expeditions. The Indians employ a strange method for fattening them. They throw them down upon the ground, force open their mouths, and make a number of incisions in the palate, then compel them to swallow a certain quantity of pulverized salt. They affirm that in horses, as well as in men,

blood excites appetite. I do not know how far this system is good, but it is intelligible that the employment of salt in such a case may not be unfavourable. Further, I have observed that horses treated in the manner I have described fatten very rapidly.

On the young horses intended for their food they very skilfully perform the operation of gelding, with a view to fattening them and rendering their flesh more delicate. The Pampeans operate in the same manner on the sheep and cattle they sell to the Christians during the continuance of their brief submissions.

These savages slaughter and cut up a horse with the most perfect skill and the greatest promptitude. As soon as they have brought him down with a blow of the *locayo* (boleadora), they spring upon him, and instantly proceed to bleed him. The women catch the blood in a wooden bowl, in which they allow it to cool, after having freed it from

albumen by stirring it with the hand. While this is being done, the men turn the animal on to its back, cut open the skin from the lower lip to the root of the tail, and at each hoof they make other cuts meeting the first at the chest and at the lower part of the belly. They begin by detaching the skin of the neck, the chest, and the thin parts with their knives, and finish the work with their hands alone, seizing the skin firmly with the left, and passing the right between the skin and the flesh. When the flaying is completed, they separate the head from the trunk, remove the shoulders, open the belly on both sides to the end of the ribs, which they separate from the backbone in one piece, after having divided the bone with their knives. Lastly, without the help of either cleavers or hammers, they cut into two equal parts the hind-quarters. In less than ten minutes all this is done, and numerous spectators, seated on the very spot, are

devouring with ferocious avidity hot livers, hearts, lungs, and raw kidneys, dipped in blood, which they afterwards drink.

The skin of the head serves to make coverings for boleadoras ; the mane is carefully tied up with the tail, and kept with ostrich feathers and skins of all sorts to be exchanged with the Hispano-Americans.

Though it is in their power to kill beasts daily, the nomad tribes get during the summer hardly any other meat than that of the game they kill in hunting. If they slaughter any animal during the hot weather, they dry the flesh by artistically cutting it into large thin slices, which they hang upon stretched cords, after having salted them on both sides. The women, who see to this, generally make a large provision of meat so prepared, both for the entertainment of visitors and for their husbands to carry with them when they set off on an expedition. When they serve up this dish to their families, they moisten it

with water, spurted over it from the mouth; they then bruise it between two stones, and put it into little wooden plates containing horse fat liquified in the sun, which their guests drink with great pleasure after they have eaten the meat. Repasts of this sort, in which I took part less often than I could have wished, gave me as much enjoyment as the best feast; compared with the meals of raw and bloody flesh which I made the greater part of the time, they appeared to me truly regal.

In certain parts, the flesh of the armadillo is almost the only food of travellers. Throughout the Pampas, as in certain woody portions of the country, I observed the four following kinds: the first is the *Emcombent*, armadillo, in Spanish *kirkincho*, in Indian *cofeurle*; the second is the *dasypus-tatouay*, in Spanish *péluda*, which attains very large proportions, and the shell of which is set with bristles at every joint. This quadruped

is most common on the eastern side of the country, where it finds for its nourishment a great quantity of roots called by the Indians *saqueul*. These are small white semi-transparent tubercles, the inside of which is mealy, half acid, half sweet, but the acidity of which disappears in cooking. They are only found in black and rich earth, a few inches below the surface, and are always grouped three or four together on the same stem. They are oval or polygonal in form, and of the size of a hazel-nut. Their stem is not much more than an inch or two high.. It is very fragile, and furnished with a great number of small narrow leaves pressed closely one upon the other, the colour of which is a mixture of sea-green and reddish-yellow.

The Pampeans are as great eaters of *saqueul* as the armadillos themselves. They sometimes gather a large quantity of them and crush them to put into milk; they call this preparation, which they allow to ferment,

saqueultchaffis; it is a refreshing dish, very agreeable and highly nutritious. Occasionally the Indians, before crushing the *saqueul* to put it in milk, as above described, leave it to bake for a few seconds in the dung-embers. The *péluda* makes a great destruction of this tubercle, scenting it as pigs scent truffles.

The third kind, the *cachicame-mulet*, which the Spaniards call *mulita*, has no hair about it. It differs from the two kinds above named in the form of its head and ears, which closely resemble those of the mule. It is found in innumerable quantities in the neighbourhood of the Argentine provinces, particularly to the north-west of Buenos Ayres, where it infests the *estancias-fermes*, the outskirts of which are generally strewn with the bodies of oxen abandoned by the farmers, who mostly kill them for the skin alone, the flesh serving for the food of these animals.

The fourth kind, called *mataco* by the Spaniards, is much less common than the others. It is generally found to the west-south-west of the Sierra Ventana only, but sometimes also to the north of the Mamou-elches. Its size is almost always the same, never attaining large dimensions. It stands very high upon its feet, and runs so quickly as often to make it difficult to catch. Its back is very much raised, its head very flat and small. Like the *tatouay*, it feeds on the *saqueul* root. It is easily tamed. When it feels itself too closely pressed, and too far from its place of shelter, its simple means of defence is to roll itself into a ball like the hedgehog. The flesh of all these kinds of armadillo is eaten; though dark in colour it is very delicate, and a good deal resembles fresh pork, but it is much more digestible. Between the carapace and the flesh, these animals have a thick layer of yellow, very fine and strong-tasted fat, the colour of which,

as well as that of the flesh, is more or less deep, according to the species of the animal and the kind of food on which it has been nourished. It is perhaps the only meat which the Indians cook thoroughly, for they roast armadillos in their shells without detaching them.

Seeking every day to acquire the good graces of the savages with whom I had already lived more than a year and a half, I succeeded, not without a painful and incessant struggle, in making a complete abnegation of all my habits as a civilized man, and, to a certain extent, copying my masters. I became skilled in all their exercises; I broke in their horses, and took so much care of them when they were wounded or ill, that they were almost always in a satisfactory state of health. It was, indeed, a real happiness to me to be as careful as I could of these poor animals whom my masters, indolent, in spite of their sordid

avariciousness, would doubtless have abandoned whenever they were wounded. I felt an indescribable pleasure in seeing with what docility they would come at my call, instead of precipitately galloping away, as they did when anybody else approached them. At whatever distance they caught sight of me, these horses would neigh, come towards me, and stand by my side to receive my caresses, to the great bewilderment of the Indians, who congratulated me on my influence. In these moments of relaxation, in the absence of all other affection, I felt almost happy at witnessing this instinctive feeling of gratitude on their part, which was the only kind of friendship I met with.

My masters, often astonished at the facility with which I caught horses by hand, a thing impossible to them, who always pursue them with a lasso, would say to me, in a friendly manner: "El mey-ouésah ouignécaë cone-palèh-quinié potro" (bring us such

or such a horse, you who can do whatever you wish with them); and to recompense me on my return, would give me a few mouthfuls of meat cooked to my taste. Unfortunately these rare moments of good nature were of very brief duration; for the cruel instincts of my savage masters speedily regained the upper hand, and more than once made me pay dearly for the momentary abatement of their rigour.

I had already had several successive masters during my sojourn amongst the Pampeans, when a most tragic and frightful incident occurred, which gave me a terrible lesson in prudence and the necessity of exercising the greatest dissimulation. In a recent and formidable invasion which they had made in the province of Buenos Ayres, the details of which were given in the French newspapers, in 1858, some young Argentines were made prisoners. Their fate might have been the same as mine; but these unhappy children,

confident in their habit of riding, and of being able to find their way in the Pampas adjoining their own province, conceived the idea of regaining their liberty, without taking into account the dangers to which their ignorance of the character of the Indians exposed them. They fled one fine morning, but their masters speedily pursued them; after some days, they were brought back to the place whence they had escaped, and condemned to death. They were placed in the midst of a circle of men on horseback, who murdered them slowly with lances. Compelled to be a spectator of this horrible scene, I saw the murderers, with an ignoble refinement of cruelty, twist their lances in each of the wounds with which they covered the bodies of their victims, all the time uttering shouts of ferocious rage, and imitating with their faces the divers expressions of suffering they were causing. Afterwards they marched by me addressing brutal remarks to me, and

smearing my body with their weapons, still smoking with the blood of those poor unfortunates; they further pointed to the bodies, and threatened me with the same destiny should I ever take it into my head to attempt to escape. As it was impossible for me to aid my unhappy companions in misfortune, I was obliged to repress all desire to defend or to avenge them; but my hatred and horror of the Indians were yet more increased by the enormity of the crime I had witnessed.

Doubtless Heaven permitted that the remembrance of my relatives, and of all the horrible sufferings I daily endured, should serve to strengthen my courage and to give me firmness of will to free myself from the infamous thrall I was forced to endure, for from that time I had no other thought. To the Indians I exhibited a calm and placid expression of face, and gave uncontrolled vent to my continual sorrow only during the night

and the rare instances when I found myself alone. It having occurred to me that the Indians would converse together freely in my presence so long as I appeared ignorant of their language, I feigned not to understand them, and occupied myself with indifferent matters during their conversations, in the course of which I gathered a mass of precious information.

CHAPTER VII.

MUSIC AMONGST THE INDIANS—THEIR DIVERS INSTRUMENTS—GAMES.

THE taste for music is inborn in all human beings. The savage, as well as the civilized man, loves to trace in its harmonious accents the sentiment, poesy, and emotions, which even the most depraved soul feels and knows how to enjoy.

Nothing is more curious and more interesting than to see the Indians, of whom I speak, ignorant of all things, yet applying themselves to the fashioning of musical instruments to amuse their hours of idleness. These rough and uncouth instruments, to a certain extent recalling our own, I will call

the flageolet, the violin, the guitar, the drum, and the flute.

The violin is composed of two horse-ribs formed like violin bows, the hair tightly stretched and moistened with saliva, and played by being rubbed one against the other. They serve indifferently, as they happen to be used, for violin and for bow. The one that fills the office of instrument is placed between the closed teeth, and held horizontally in the left hand. The Indians move the bow quickly, and by means of this grating obtain stifled sounds, which they modulate with the unemployed fingers of the left hand, in exactly the same manner as our *dilettanti*. They cannot execute any varied air, but they very cleverly reproduce several words of their guttural language.

They make very little use of the guitar : it is made out of the blade-bone of a horse, on which they stretch hair strings of different thickness. It is generally used for dancing

to; they hold it and play on it with as much pretention as if they were consummate musicians. It may be guessed, from the construction, that the harmony of this instrument is calculated to irritate the nerves and ear, rather than to charm them.

The flageolet has some merit, and demands for its construction a certain portion of intelligence and skill. It is the instrument with which the Indians succeed best, and with which they most divert themselves, for it enables them to play all their favourite airs. It is formed out of a hollow stem of the *Generium argentinus*, cut to the length of from fifty to sixty centimètres, which they pierce superficially at one end with eight holes, at equal distance one from the other. The opposite end serves for the mouth-piece; this they split in the form of a hautbois-reed, the opening of which they maintain with a transverse hair.

The flute is nothing more than a bit of

hollow reed, with an aperture made at one end, into which they blow with all their might, and from which they force execrable sounds, similar to those extractable from a large key.

Lastly, the drum is composed of a sort of wooden bowl, more or less large, over which a wild-cat skin is stretched, or a piece of the paunch of a horse. This instrument, for which as well as the flute they have a strong liking, is much used by them, especially in their religious festivals and character dances.

From this it may be seen that the Indians, in spite of their grave appearance, seize on all occasions to amuse themselves, and create a thousand means of doing so. To their passion for music another, and one no less active, may be added, that of gambling, to which they give themselves up with feverish avidity.

In the Pampean tribes, those nearest to the Hispano-American people, they play with

Spanish cards ; but none of them are a whit more conscientious in their mode of playing than professional card-sharpers. They make almost imperceptible marks at each corner of the cards, recognizable only by their practised eyes. Each player in turn uses his own pack so prepared. In shuffling the cards they distinguish the good from the bad, and are so dexterous as always to deal the latter to their adversaries. The matches in which they engage are usually continued for a great length of time, and with wild persistency. The one who wins the game always considers that he has won it fairly, because of the difficulties he has had to overcome to secure the stakes, which consist generally of objects of some value, such as silver spurs or stirrups.

Their other games, and those most in vogue among all the tribes, are the *tchouékah*, or *ouignou* (dice), *amouicah* (or black and white), and knuckle-bones (*foros*).

In the game of tchouëkah, each man, entirely naked, his body streaked with various colours, his hair turned up and fastened with a cloth band, and armed with a heavy stick, called *ouignou*, curved at one end, matches himself against one of his congeners willing to risk a stake equivalent to his own. One party puts down his stake on one side, the other on the opposite side. The length of the ground, calculated according to the number of the players, is marked out by lances set up two and two. The players place themselves in couples opposite one another. A small wooden ball is placed between the two forming the centre of the line. The two champions then cross their sticks, the crooked ends resting on the ground, so that on drawing them sharply together, the ball, which is caught between the two crooks, is put in motion. Once thrown into the air, it is for whoever can to stop its flight with his stick, either to give it

a new impulsion in the direction it was going, or to turn it in the opposite direction. If one of the players, who, in the interest of his partners, ought to have made it go to the right, should make it go to the left, he is immediately obliged to pull hair with the nearest of those whom he has injured.

It is very rare for these amusements to pass off without the breaking of legs or arms, or grave injury to heads. Besides these casualties, there are the blows which the judges, armed with stout leathern thongs, discharge from the backs of their horses on the fatigued combatants, to spur them on to increased exertion.

The game of dice, or rather the game of white and black, is composed of eight small squares of bone, blackened on one side, and played two against two. A skin is spread between the players, so that their hands may at once easily seize the squares,

which they let fall while calling out loudly and striking their hands together, for the purpose of confusing each other. Every time the number of blacks is even, the player goes on until he throws odd; the other then takes his turn. The game might go on eternally, but, fatigued and bewildered, one of the two at last becomes the dupe of the other, who, possessing greater coolness, often scores double unknown to his companion, and so wins it. Brawls often follow the conclusion of the game, for three times out of four the loser refuses to give up the stake lost.

Like the gauchos of Buenos Ayres, who in their desperate gambling bouts lose their horses, and even the clothes from off their backs, the Indians willingly stake their entire stock of cattle, and even whatever male and female captives they possess. Under such circumstances I have seen unhappy girls passed from hand to hand,

and submitted to the unwelcome caresses of a great number of masters, who overcame their desperate resistance by the employment of force.

CHAPTER VIII.

PROJECTS OF FLIGHT — DESPAIR — CHANGE OF
POSITION — I BECOME SECRETARY TO THE
INDIANS.

WHAT man is there who, seeing the sufferings of the victims of whom I have spoken, would not, like me, have felt his own sorrows give place to deep indignation and the desire to protect these poor women? How many times, animated by this sentiment, and ready to spring to their aid, has not the sad reality of my position unveiled itself in its full extent before my eyes, even to the paralyzing of my will! What could I have done? What would have been the result of my recklessness? The death of an Indian, perhaps; and I should have caused that of many victims. In our common interest,

therefore, I considered it my duty to act with redoubled prudence.

Nevertheless, I more than once formed plans for escaping, and carrying with me some of these unhappy captives; but being obliged to admit to myself how small was the chance of success in an attempt of this kind, I had to renounce those projects. By myself alone, I would, without hesitation, have risked all the perils of such an enterprise, for I felt in a condition to gallop for days and nights, and to sell my life dearly in case of pursuit; but with women—delicate women who rarely mount on horseback, and who would have been overcome by fatigue in the course of a journey requiring the greatest promptitude, it was almost certain that I should be overtaken by the ferocious Indians, and be the cause of death to all.

These reflections compelled me to submit to the fate by which I was overwhelmed. Reduced to this state of helplessness, I led

a sad and painful life, ceaselessly oppressed by melancholy thoughts on the subject of my beloved family, whom I more and more thought I should never again behold. Nearly every night my sleep was beset by horrible dreams, in which I re-enacted, one after the other, all the sanguinary scenes in which I had been the witness or the victim.

So much physical and moral suffering resulted in the wearing-out of my patience, my courage became actual frenzy, and, one after the other, at the risk of being murdered, I made several attempts to regain my liberty. But, alas ! every time, unforeseen obstacles opposed my success ; I was even very nearly paying with my life for these fruitless attempts, for, on more than one of those occasions I had to struggle with my assassins. Thank God, at those solemn moments, my coolness did not desert me, but each time subterfuges, more or less plausible, but excusable in my position, enabled me to

escape certain death. When these difficult moments were past, I was subject to a great reaction ; I was seized with a restlessness which almost drove me mad.

I nevertheless repeated these attempts, in which I was always unsuccessful. The suspicion of the Indians increased, and it was many times debated whether I should not be put to death.

At length, completely discouraged, and not knowing what was to become of me, I entertained the culpable thought of cutting short my suffering by putting an end to my existence. With this view I had carried off a knife and the portraits of my family which the Indians had appropriated, not wishing to be separated from them at this solemn moment. I then stole away, unperceived, as I thought, towards a stony excavation in the Pampas. I had already implored the Divine mercy, and raised my arm to accomplish my fatal design, when the hand raised to strike

was unexpectedly seized. It was an Indian, my master, who rightly judging that death appeared to me preferable to the sort of existence to which he condemned me, saw only in my desperate resolution an attack upon his proprietorial rights. After having beaten me and taken from me the portraits, he declared that henceforth not a movement of mine should escape his watchfulness. The services I had rendered to him had probably some value in his eyes, and he would not at any price be obliged to do for himself what he daily commanded me to do.

Some time after that, a captive, the wife of an alcalde, full of courage and resolution, attempted to escape. She had got away a considerable distance during the night, when she was overtaken. As she was young and handsome, she was not put to death, but she was bound hand and foot, and flogged till two leathern thongs were worn out, then given over to the brutality of twenty Indians.

Become insane, she sometimes fled from her master's tent, after having broken all his weapons, and, armed with the stem of a lance, struck indiscriminately every one she met on her way. The Indians, who feared her greatly at these times, got rid of her by poison.

How many such occurrences I could relate, if I were not afraid of too much exciting the reader's feelings, and if my own sensations on recalling these distressing remembrances were not too painful.

The least unfortunate of the young girls captured by the Indians are those whom they make their wives; the major part of the others are sold to distant tribes, and finish in an earthly hell a life often commenced under the happiest auspices. As to the poor children, they almost all give themselves up to the ignoble existence of the nomads, often forgetting even their mother tongue. They are, to tell the truth, tole-

rably well treated by the Indians, who, in consideration of their extreme youth, forgive them for having been born Christians. Horrible and almost impossible as it is to believe it, I have seen several women, who have become mothers in the midst of slavery, and who were more to be dreaded than the Indians themselves, showing themselves more cruel towards other captives like themselves, whose projects of flight they betrayed.

In spite of their superstitious belief in the success of all enterprises undertaken in company with a Christian, the Indians, whose suspicions I had awakened to the highest point by my various attempts at flight, refrained from taking me with them on their expeditions. They even took the precaution of placing me in the hands of friends, who made themselves responsible for my person during their more or less prolonged absence. On their return, sugar, tobacco, yerba (American tea), the articles principally coveted

by them, often abounded. The linen and clothes stolen by them were treasured for use at festivals and meetings. To me, for a very long time, they gave nothing but a fragment of the cloak of some poor soldier who had sunk under their blows.

An altogether unforeseen circumstance, however, compelled them to make me take part in one of their flights. About two thousand five hundred Argentine soldiers, under the guidance of Indians who had made their submission, having unexpectedly surprised some of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the one in which I was held in captivity, I was obliged to accompany the Pampeans, who, after gathering together in haste, resolved to take the offensive, and repulse their aggressors, making those who had acted as their guides pay dearly for their treachery. These had retreated behind the Argentines, and appeared indisposed to take part in the action. Made furious by the

sight of them, and wishing to get at them as quickly as possible, the inhabitants of the desert made a furious and headlong charge. Stricken by this terrible shock, the Argentines broke into two bands, in the midst of which, continuing to advance, the Indians suddenly surrounded the traitors, and engaged with them in a special and horrible struggle, during which other nomads, their companions, rushed in pursuit of the scattered Argentines, and put them completely to rout.

The combat did not cease till near sunset; it had lasted since the morning. Left masters of the field of battle, the Indians pillaged the dead, and finished those who were still living, finding amongst the latter three of the traitors. They took care not to kill them out of hand, as they had done with the Christians, that kind of death appearing to them too easy; but, for the purpose of satisfying their vengeance in a more complete and striking manner, they planted

in the ground three stakes, to which they strongly bound these unfortunates by the extremities of their limbs; they then stripped from each in turn, living as they were, the skin, as if it had been that of some animal, answering with abuse the cries wrung from the poor creatures by the atrocious sufferings they were made to endure, which they terminated by driving a dagger into their hearts. The authors of this horrible vengeance, their hands and faces stained with the blood of their victims, shared amongst them the skins, which they tore into strips, and which I afterwards saw plaited into various articles intended to be sent as emblems of threat and defiance to the other Indians who had escaped their cruelty. This was an immemorial custom in the times when all the nomad races lived in a continual state of bloody warfare.

Notwithstanding their victory, the Indians, far from being reassured with regard

to their enemies, and, still dreading some aggression on their part, daily changed their residence from place to place for several months, and always in opposite directions. When those whom they had sent out to explore returned in the night-time, contrary to their usual habit, the horde, suddenly awakened by the barking of the dogs, were seized with such terror that every one sprang on horseback, spreading the alarm through the neighbourhood, and taking to flight without daring to look behind them. In these moments of panic, the greater part of them took no heed of their cattle, which they would thus have abandoned to the enemy. However, the time came when, having become sufficiently reassured, seeing themselves deprived of everything they valued, and their flocks and herds thinned, they made other expeditions, the success of which greatly influenced my destiny.

Some pieces of printed paper, which had

served to wrap up a great part of the articles composing their booty, and which they had thrown away, fell into my hands. I read them many times with joy; for it furnished me with an unhopèd-for recreation. One day, when I had begun, for the twentieth time, to read in secret a Buenos Ayres newspaper, containing an account of the last and terrible invasion they had made in this province, from which they had carried off more than two hundred captives, I was found thus occupied by some Indians, who exhibited a joyful surprise, and hastened to inform the chiefs of the discovery they had made. At first, greatly disquieted by this circumstance, it was not long before I was reassured by the unusual and almost friendly greeting I received in the evening, when I came, according to my custom, to have the animals confided to my care examined and counted. From a few questions put to me by my master, I learned that he was proud of possessing a

slave of my value, and that, no doubt, I should be called on to serve the cacique of the tribe..

The expected occasion soon presented itself, for these degraded beings, when they have gorged for a few days, are tempted to continue the indulgence of their gluttony and vanity. To satisfy these passions, they seek all imaginable means. With this view they at times offer at the frontier posts a pretended submission, during which they make exchanges of various kinds, such as ostrich feathers, horsehair, and skins of all sorts, against such articles as they are eager to possess. It was under such circumstances that I was put to the proof as secretary to the chief, who said to me :—

“You know how to read, you must, therefore, know how to write ; consequently, you must write the letter which I am going to dictate to you. If you do not betray my confidence, I shall hold you in consideration ;

in the opposite case, you will be put to death."

I was seated on the ground, having before me a pile of skins serving me for a table; white paper recently brought back from an expedition; for ink, indigo diluted with alkali; and, for a pen, an eaglet's feather, roughly cut with a blunt knife. Surrounded by Indians who, lance and club in hand, could have killed me at the smallest sign from their chief, I commenced my office.

In spite of my ardent desire to write only what was in accordance with my conscience, it was impossible for me to do this. Such is their suspicion of others, that in the course of the dictation I was more than twenty times made to read the letter; and, after I had written a few sentences, they designedly, but without appearing to do so, changed the sense of the ideas expressed, for the purpose of testing my truthfulness. If I had been so

unfortunate as even to invert the order of the words addressed to me, it would have been impossible for me to have escaped detection, such is the fidelity of their prodigious memory.

Though it was not possible for me to impose on them, they threatened me from excess of prudence, and made me give them a copy of the missive for the purpose of getting it verified by Argentine deserters living with neighbouring tribes. These men are wretches often condemned to irons, or even death, for their numerous crimes, and who are sure of finding an asylum amongst the Indians, who, perfectly well informed as to the character of their guests, receive them as people on whom they know they may count blindly. They find in them guides for their pillaging expeditions, and easy-going accomplices; thus they put the utmost confidence in them.

This first correspondence was carried to the frontier by Indians named by the cacique;

one of them was my master. Some children accompanied them to carry the articles intended to be exchanged. Twelve or fifteen days after their departure, these children returned, exhausted by fatigue, terror in their faces, and uttering cries of distress. They related that after the dispatch had been read, the two envoys had been put in irons, awaiting death, and that it was certain I had betrayed the general confidence, and communicated some details of their recent invasions. Naturally inclined to believe ill, these barbarians had no other intention than that of killing me. It was the cacique who, imagining me to be absent, directed them not to awaken my suspicion by raising any unusual cries; he advised them also to wait until the morning of the following day to execute their project, and to select the moment when I should be occupied in getting the flock together.

Chance willed that I should be close at

hand at that moment; thanks to the approach of night, I overheard this conversation without being seen, and was enabled to put myself on my guard. The next morning, when, as usual, I went to make my round, I perceived that in place of the strong steed I had ridden the evening before, an unwieldy horse had been substituted, but I took care not to exhibit any surprise. I was riding slowly along on this wretched nag, when I perceived a party of Indians galloping towards me at full speed, and rending the air with imprecations. The distance which separated me from them was still great, and I was fortunate enough to meet the troop of horses confided to my care coming in my direction to quench their thirst. Great were my joy and my hope. I quickly dismounted from my horse, taking off the bridle to put it on the best horse in the troop, which, recognizing me, allowed me to approach it without difficulty. In an instant I was on horseback; then,

taking care to frighten the other horses, so as to scatter them, and deprive my enemies of all chance of coming up with me, I darted away in the opposite direction at the utmost speed of my horse.

After galloping the entire day, I arrived at nightfall at the dwelling-place of Calfou-courah (Blue-stone), the Grand Cacique of the Indian Federation, of which the tribe of my persecutors formed part, but who, however, did not yet know me. On my arrival I could discover among the Indians before me no sign by which to distinguish the chief from his subjects. It was only when he spoke to the others, to give them orders, that I recognized this chief by his imperious manner.

He was a man already more than a hundred years of age, though appearing to be sixty at most; his still black hair covered a vast unwrinkled forehead, which bright and scrutinizing eyes rendered highly intelligent. The entire physiognomy of this chief, though

stamped with a certain dignity, nevertheless perfectly recalled the type of the Western Patagonians, to whom he owed his origin. Like them he was of high stature; he had very wide shoulders, and a protruding chest; his back was slightly bowed, his walk heavy, almost difficult, but he still enjoyed all his faculties; with the exception of two, lost in a combat in which he had the lower lip cut through, this old man possessed the whole of his teeth intact.

Astonished to see me, as he well might be, this man demanded of me what I wanted with him, and what motive had made me so rash as to come alone to visit him.

“El - mey - ouignecaë - tchéota-conne-pa-émy - tchoumétchy - kissouh - conne - pa-émy - tchoumbé-émy-nay-pofso-lagane a ney-tchou-malo-kissouh-passian-intchin-meoh?”

(But, Christian, where do you come from? How is it that you come alone?)

Who do you want? You are mad, I think. Why do you come to me alone?)

I made myself understood by him. I explained to him, in a few words, what had happened on the night before and in the morning, begging him to take into consideration the truthfulness of my statement. I ended by showing him, that if I had deceived the Indians I should infallibly have tried to escape in the interval by some means; that, on the contrary, having nothing to reproach myself with, I had come to crave his protection, and confided myself to his generosity, until he should have received some unquestionable proof either of my honesty or of my treachery; so that by this means, if I were innocent, he would not have to reproach himself with the death of a faithful servant whose services might still be of some use to him.

Flattered by my confidence, as well as by a few words addressed to his vanity, this man, really more human than his fellow-

savages, treated me almost with friendliness, and promised me his protection: only, he added, I should never have horses at my disposal.

The next day, a party of the tribe I had quitted came, its chief at its head, to request an audience of Calfoucourah, and to demand my instant execution as a thing due. Throughout the debate I was present, at first with closed lips; but, at last, nervous at seeing the horde so hungry for my blood, and perceiving that their solicitations were beginning to impress the chief, I saw that I could no longer remain silent, and rose. Reminding the Grand Cacique that he had promised me his protection, I strove to make my innocence understood by all, by repeating exactly the statement I had made on the preceding evening, taking great care not to hurt the self-love of any of the persons present. Calfoucourah declared himself in my favour, recognizing, he said, that it

was impossible for any guilty man to speak as I had done. He forbade every one to illtreat me ; and then, turning towards me, reassured me by saying that I should not quit him, and ended by telling my old chief that, when he produced incontestable proofs of my disloyalty, I should be given back into his hands, to be disposed of as he pleased. This judgment pronounced, the meeting broke up, and the horde went away darting angry looks at me.

Several months passed without anything occurring to enlighten the Indians as to the position of the two captives held by the Argentines. Their animosity against me became all the stronger. They never ceased visiting the grand cacique, who, himself, sometimes influenced by their various conjectures, appeared to waver in his belief in me, now treating me with ill-temper, now appearing to place the greatest confidence in me. He often questioned me ; and as my

answers always accorded with those given in my first interrogation, it always ended by my preserving his protection. During the whole of the five months through which this state of things lasted, however, I was the constant object of an ever-increasing watchfulness. Indian troops went frequently to prowl in the neighbourhood of the haciendas, for the purpose of learning news of their captured companions ; but horses and men were fatigued uselessly : they came back without bringing the smallest intelligence. Weary of these fruitless attempts, they resolved to allow some time to pass before renewing them.

It was during this very period of rest and apparent neglect that the two men supposed to have been for ever lost, reappeared. A meeting of all the tribes interested in the event followed, and my innocence was solemnly proclaimed by the returned men : they stated that, having been recognized as

having taken part in a preceding razzia on the Rio-Quéquène, they had been held captive until the Government of Buenos Ayres, to whom the matter was referred, had decided on their fate ; that a formal order had arrived from the capital to hold them prisoners and make them work ; that it had even been a question of putting them to death, but that the offers of peace contained in the despatch of which they were the bearers had been taken into account, and that it was to this missive they owed their lives. Their liberty they had regained through the negligence of their guards.

From that time a complete change in my favour took place in the minds of all. Even my greatest enemies had nothing but praises to address to me. All suspicion vanished in a moment ; they appeared even to forget my attempts to escape. I was allowed to mount on horseback, and accompany them on all occasions. Considered worthy of the

general confidence, I was replaced in my office of writer to the nomad confederation.

The chief of the tribe to which I belonged before the occurrence of the difficult circumstances I have related, tried many times to regain possession of me. Calfou-courah, superior to him both in rank and in generosity, did not in any way seek to oppose his wishes ; but, nevertheless, he would not act without first consulting me. Being still under the impression of the dangers I had run, and of the ill-treatment I had received amongst my old masters, my answer was dictated by the gratitude which I felt towards this generous man to whom I owed my life, and near whom I was almost as free as an Indian himself. I expressed to him the sincere and eager desire I felt not to leave him.

Touched by this proceeding, he held out to me his hand, saying—

“Comè-ouèntrou-à-èmy comè-piouquet-nié

tah émy tefa inchine-ni mapo quinié-ouétchet
moulèané-émy kah-anneteux-houla-houé-sah-
dsomo-tchupalane intchine-ni houné."

(Good man, you are a good heart. You shall remain a young inhabitant of my country; and more, there shall never be a day when towards you an ill word shall escape from our mouths.)

I belonged from that time definitively to the tribe of the Mamouelches, called the Calfoucouratchets. The Indians composing it are much less nomadic than the other tribes of which I have spoken to the reader; they form for the most part a sort of court about Calfoucourah, the high chief, or kind of king, whose power extends, as I have already said, over all the other tribes, the Pampeans, Mamouelches, Puelches, and Patagonians.

The country they inhabit is most wild and picturesque; it is divided into dense forests, plains, and naturally-formed sandhills, in the

funnel-shaped hollows of which lakes of soft and limpid water are enclosed, about which the Indians construct their tents. In the woods or on the plain any water besides that of the salt-pools is vainly sought. The soil, almost always chalky and saltpetrous, rarely offers a vegetation comparable with that of the Pampas; but, on the other hand, the woods so abound in algarrobas that the fruits of these trees almost suffice for the needs of the flocks with which they swarm.

Besides a few animals straying here and there on the plain, nothing indicates to the belated traveller the presence of Indians, for such of these as do not inhabit the interior of the sandhills, build their tents on the outskirts of the surrounding woods.

The character of the Calfoucouratchets is more sociable than that of the other nomads. I have found amongst them some tendency to compassion; they treated me more humanely. Their sympathy appeared to me to have

wholly resulted from the fortunate event which had fixed me amongst them. Thanks to the special consideration exhibited towards me by Calfoucourah, who always addressed me by the title of son (*voitium*), as well as to the complete change which had taken place in the minds of the others, I requested and obtained permission again to mount on horseback: his kindness even went so far as to allow me to make long excursions in company with a few Indians, who served me as escort, and for introduction to the different tribes I visited. Everywhere I was received with marks of the highest consideration. Some of my entertainers went still further, and added presents to their other attentions. These gifts consisted either of tobacco or of food for the journey.

As I had no longer any reason to feign ignorance of their own language, and having besides found several Italians who spoke a little Spanish, I never went amongst them without

addressing a few words to them, which infinitely flattered them, and won me their confidence.

During the winter the Calfoucouratchets are much more nomadic than during the summer, being then obliged to seek the fertility they need. However, they do not quit the wooded country, which is so great a resource to them. The regions inhabited by them being warmer, they are darker hued; their height is inferior to that of the Pampeans. Though equally vigorous and strong, they are much more idle, and have a very limited intelligence.

Besides hunting the ostrich and the gama, they think of nothing but eating, drinking, and sleeping. They are generally extremely dirty. Their gluttony is such that when they can eat no more, and disliking to leave their teeth without employment, they munch continually a kind of white rosin which they call *otcho*. They gather it from a small shrub known amongst them by the name of *motchi*.

This rosin is quite tasteless, but it makes them expectorate a good deal. By dint of munching it becomes soft, and almost like the india-rubber which children chew at school. It is the first thing they offer to any one who visits them, and they make no scruple to give him a piece out of their mouths. It is even considered amongst them an honour to share in this manner.

The idleness and carelessness of these Indians are such that even when they are entirely destitute of cattle, they often refuse horses which their friends offer to lend them, to enable them to take part in some expedition, preferring to install themselves first with one then with another, and to live at their expense during the winter. They content themselves solely with the produce of their hunting through the summer, or with roots which they find in abundance in the fine sand at the foot of trees.

Nowhere amongst them have I found the

magnificent vegetation which is to be seen abounding in Brazil or Chili. Throughout their woods, algarrobas and tchagnals, low-growing trees, twisted and set with formidable thorns, as dangerous to the hoofs of horses as to the feet of men, are mixed with a mass of small bushes equally thorny, the whole forming impassable thickets. Numerous pumas and jaguars there establish their lairs and rear their young, for whose nourishment they devastate the flocks.

Like the animals, the men are very fond of the fruit of the algarrobas (*soë*), having all the appearance of a bean-pod, and containing a very hard seed. It is a kind of food that supports beasts of burden, and gives to their flesh a delicate flavour easily distinguished and much appreciated by the Indians.

Amongst the roots of which the latter make use, the *ponieux* is perhaps the most curious of any I have observed. Its form

and length are those of a large carrot; its outside skin is thick and tough, dark brown, and fluted longitudinally. The top is surmounted by a massive flower of darker tint, and composed of two parts separated from each other by a round hard stamen, which remains in the same state through all the phases of maturity. The inside is white, firm, and bitter before its maturity; sweet and juicy when it is ripe. An incalculable quantity of black grains, infinitely smaller than the seeds of figs, is mixed with the fleshy portion. At maturity the root, like a cork badly fastened on to a soda-water bottle, breaks slowly through the middle of its envelope at the upper part, carrying with it a sort of cap. This fruit then emits a strong, melon-like scent, very agreeable to the nostrils; but one is astonished to find that it has a taste so entirely different from that promised by its odour, but resembling that of a raw apple. Left to itself, this

strange fruit becomes rust-coloured, and quickly passes into a state of decomposition. It then becomes covered with white maggots, like those of meat, that absorb it, always leaving the seeds, which sow themselves in their own envelope, its slow decomposition serving them for manure.

I had many times tasted this sort of root, which the Indians call *ponieux* (potatoes) without discovering in it anything to justify the name, when one day my masters, having made an ample provision of them, which they fried in horse fat, invited me to partake of them. I found this dish excellent, and was not a little surprised to find that, prepared in this manner, these strange roots had really no other flavour than that of the potato. I now regret extremely that my rapid and unforeseen flight prevented me from bringing away a specimen of this leguminous root, certainly unknown in Europe, and the cultivation of which would be most easy.

Many Indians eat it raw. I often did the same, but having perceived the property which this vegetable has of provoking inflammation and constipation, I only eat it with moderation, and I understood why the Indians, after having eaten a certain number of them, drink a quantity of liquid horse fat.

The occupations of the Mamouelche women are the same as those of the Indian women of all the other tribes, that is to say, they are the slaves of their husbands, whose idleness is, in some respects, still greater, which is not saying a little. They take much less care of their dress, and are generally dirtier. Their intelligence and skill are very limited; they, also, make cloaks of coarse wool, and *lamatras* (horse-cloths); but the wool they use is generally ill-washed and ill-spun. As well as their husbands, the women are very indolent; but as these are the more exacting because they do nothing, their wives are often exposed to their ill-

treatment. Jealousy, the never-dying worm in all these brutish souls, is amongst them pushed to excess ; thus revenge is very frequent with them.

The superstition of the Indians shows itself every moment, even in the smallest things. Their minds are affected by change of weather ; very gay when the weather is fine, they become silent and almost morose when it is bad. Visitors who present themselves amongst them always feel these impressions ; for instead of the politeness and attention which they have a right to expect, they often meet with rudeness.

The Mamouelches are very kind and helpful to one another ; but they have no respect for property, even for that of their best friends. They make continual and nightly thefts of animals, which they kill a long way off, taking care to hide the bones and skins in different places, and making a number of détours in carrying home the

flesh. I have seen many receive with the greatest assurance the visits of the men they have duped, to whom they have served up the flesh of the stolen animals, all the while pretending to take the warmest interest in their loss. Their effrontery sometimes even goes to the length of proposing to accompany them in their search, this proposition being generally accepted; for the friends, guided by a certain instinctive suspicion, or even by some sort of indication, know perfectly well that they are in the presence of the delinquents, against whom they only seek to acquire unquestionable proofs.

Searches of this kind present many difficulties; but the perseverance and perspicuity of the Indians are such that the persons robbed often succeed in gathering together the incriminating hide and bones, and in following one by one the traces (*rastros*) of the path taken by the thieves. When they have acquired all the proofs they need, they go,

accompanied by witnesses, to the dwellings of the guilty persons, and flatly denounce their unhandsome behaviour; the accused almost always receives the accusers arrogantly, who see themselves driven to the necessity of using force to obtain justice. They drag them, whether they will or not, before Calfoucourah, who fixes the sum to be paid in damages and interest, the total of which is sometimes large; and, to prevent evasion of payment on the part of the condemned, they are held in custody until the judgment of the chief has been complied with.

In all the wooded parts, as well as in the heart of the Pampas, one is horribly troubled during the hot season by mosquitoes (*riris*), which entirely deprive you of sleep. The Indians, before going to rest, cover their bodies with the greatest care, and lie with their heads to the wind, after having set light to small heaps of half-dried dung, the thick

smoke of which, passing over their faces, drives away these mischievous visitors. These unsavoury insects are not, however, the only scourge to be feared, for in whatever direction one may go by day or night, one is continually harassed by a sort of breeze-flies (*tavanas*), that attack men as much as animals, and riddle the body with punctures from which the blood flows in abundance. I have sometimes, on horseback, seen myself so covered with them that, with a sweep of the hand, I have killed hundreds at once, while I appeared to be bathed in streams of blood.

Whatever may be the nature of the country inhabited by the Indians, a great quantity of serpents are found, varying in length from fifty centimetres to one metre and twenty or thirty centimetres, to which the nomads give the name of *tchochia*. They are dark green on the upper part of the body; the sides gold-colour; the belly marbled with

blue, red, white, and black. The Indians greatly dread their bite, which they say is incurable. These reptiles never attack men unless they are threatened by them. Their habit is to insinuate themselves among the long grass; there they sleep during the greatest heat, and this frequently exposes the cattle to be bitten by them, for not perceiving them, they walk right on to them, or, very often, in the act of browsing, plunge their heads into the very tufts in which the reptiles are concealed. I have seen a number of horses and oxen that had been bitten in the muzzle die within two or three hours in consequence of these bites. The tchochia feed on toads, on animals they pursue into their burrows, or on birds, which they charm from the bushes in which they seek them.

In the summer-time, one can hardly stir without meeting with some, and though they are not gifted with any great swiftness, the Indians are very much afraid of them. They

kill them at a distance with their slings, or with their lances, which are never less than from fifteen to twenty feet long.

Having, from the outset of my captivity, remarked the terror with which these animals inspired my masters, I determined to give them a proof of my contempt of danger, and, though I was completely naked, killed one by crushing his head with my heel. I never thought to see these savages so completely stupefied as they were at the sight of this act of temerity ; they rushed away from me, and manifested so much alarm and anger, that I thought it prudent not to repeat the exhibition.

On another occasion, however, one of these reptiles helped to give the Indians a high opinion of me. I was engaged in digging a well, with a shovel made out of the blade-bone of a horse fixed to the end of a stick ; and as the work which I was carrying on, exposed to the full rays of the sun, greatly

fatigued me, I rested every now and then, with my back against one of the sides of the well. At one of these moments, I was suddenly encircled by a tchochia, which curled itself about my body. In spite of the alarm which its cold contact caused me, I was fortunate enough not to lose all presence of mind; seizing the reptile tightly with both hands, I flung it to a distance, where it fell in the midst of the astounded and terrified Indians, who fled in all directions, uttering cries of distress. I had not been bitten; but for the rest of the day I feared being attacked with an illness, such as an Indian had then recently experienced, after having worn a cloak over which I had seen a tchochia crawl. Fortunately, however, I suffered nothing beyond my first alarm, and I had even the good fortune to find this incident turn to my advantage, for I overheard the Indians say of me: "El-mey-tah-tefa-quimé-comé-ouignecaë-rouf-domo laéh-lane-comé-

lagane-tchiouet - chet-vita-ouènetrou-méah."

(He is a good Christian ; for truly he is not dead ; it must be that this young man is favoured by God without doubt.) And they treated me with the greatest respect.

CHAPTER IX.

ORGIES OF THE INDIANS — THEIR DIFFERENT
DRINKS—I CONSTRUCT A HUT—SCIENCES OF
THE INDIANS.

WITHOUT exception of tribe, rank, sex, or age, all Indians love to intoxicate themselves.

Idleness is considered amongst them the *ne plus ultra* of felicity, and for a quickly-swallowed bumper of liquor they will willingly give the most valued articles in their possession. They are not stingy of it, however, for when one of them has returned from some distant journey and brought spirits with him, the whole horde appears determined not to give him even time to unsaddle his horses ;

it crowds into his domicile in the hope of tasting gratis a portion of the so-much-coveted liquor. The proprietor of the *roukah* does all he can to satisfy these intruders, to whom he offers the most gracious welcome.

The Indians often drink for several consecutive days, and in the full blaze of the sun, without at all appearing to suffer in health; they even preserve their memory unaffected during their completest intoxication, and if by chance a bottle comes into their hands, there will be no danger of its contents being spilt, from the habit they have of inserting one finger in the neck and clutching it firmly with the others.

I have never seen anything more disgusting or extraordinary than this medley of wild men and women, heaped together pell-mell, talking, singing, or yelling, in turn, dragging themselves along the ground in a sitting posture, or on their hands, to try and steal from one another a few drops of liquor,

or to abuse each other in the coarsest manner. These orgies are rarely ended without blows, for the Indians as well as civilized men, have the unfortunate habit of choosing these moments to brag of their achievements; and as it frequently happens that the word *ouignecaë* (Christian) is pronounced in the course of these recitals, the hatred which they feel for the latter sometimes expresses itself in frightful *mêlées*, in which both men and women join, doubtless under the impression that they are being attacked by the Spaniards, and would inevitably kill one another, if some of the less tipsy or more reasonable amongst them did not interfere to disarm them.

The Indians carry their liquor on horseback; they put it in ostrich or sheep skins, but generally prefer the latter, as being more easily prepared and holding a greater quantity. They make leathern bottles of them, to which they give the name of *ounékas*, and

which perfectly resist the pressure of the girths. They prepare them in the following manner: they kill the sheep by cutting off the head, and remove the skin in one entire piece, making only one opening for one of the hind legs to the belly, through which they contrive to pass the whole body; they next tie up the openings at the neck and hind portion, and then distend the skin to stretch and wash it; finally, after having dried it, they rub it between their hands to make it supple.

If the Mamouelches are less favoured than the Puelches and the Pampeans—for they sometimes pass a long time without being able to procure any *Ouignecaë Poulcou* (Christian's liquor)—they nevertheless find means to intoxicate themselves pretty frequently, during the summer and autumn, by the help of drinks of their own manufacture. Nature, which has denied them certain fruits which one would expect to find in the forests

they inhabit, has given some others which they know well how to turn to good account : the algarrobas, for example, which serves to fatten their flocks and for the manufacture of a liquor ; the piquinino (*trulcaouët*) ; and a kind of Barbary fig, the flavour of which is very agreeable.

The Indians gather large quantities of algarrobas, which they crush between two stones and put into leathern bags filled with water, for the purpose of obtaining the *soé-Poulcou* drink, which they leave to ferment for several days, and on which a scum forms which they carefully remove ; to this they add another portion of the algarrobas boiled, and stir the whole well together. This preparation is very pleasant to drink, and intoxicates them completely ; but they cannot take any great quantity of it without enduring violent colics and nervous contractions, which entirely prostrate them. They also eat the algarrobas raw, but in small quantities,

for this fruit, though very sweet, contains an acid that makes the lips, gums, and tongue swell, and at the same time occasions a burning thirst which often prevents the least cautious from eating for a day or two.

The *Trulcaouët*, known to the Spaniards under the name of piquinino, is at least as abundant as the algarrobas, and is much more esteemed by the Indians, who, like children, are very fond of all sweet things. The form of this fruit is oval; it is of the size of a pea. There are two sorts, red and black. Its flavour is most agreeable, but this fruit is so tender that upon the slightest pressure all the fleshy part turns into a thick liquid. The shrub on which it grows does not attain a height of more than four or five feet. It is very bushy, has delicate and flexible branches bristling with an infinite number of small thorns, which, when the fruit is being gathered, break in the skin, into which they introduce a venom which causes small painful

swellings. Its leaves are small, round, and of a grass-green colour. If the Indians were reduced to the necessity of gathering this fruit by hand, in spite of all their patience, they would not be able to satisfy their gluttonous appetite, therefore they employ a means as simple as it is effectual, which secures them from all injury, and enables them to fill in the course of a few minutes the bags with which they furnish themselves to carry it: they spread under the shrub a large skin on to which all the fruit falls, each branch being gently struck with a stick. When they have gathered as much as they require, they fan it with another sheep-skin carefully stripped of its wool, and tightly stretched on a hoop, to separate the numerous leaves and thorns which, in spite of all their precautions, are mostly mixed with the fruit. This operation finished, they cram themselves in emulation of one another, fill their bags, which they hang on either side of

their saddles, and then gallop home, where a number of idlers, under pretence of paying a visit, come to regale themselves at their expense. However, in spite of their great number, these gluttons are not permitted to eat up the whole store, for the mistress of the dwelling, to the annoyance of her indiscreet guests, resolutely carries off the larger portion of the fruit transformed into liquid, and pours it into a horse-hide rounded in the shape of a vase, where she leaves it to ferment for four or five days. At the end of that time, having in this manner obtained a sweet and delicious *liqueur*, closely analogous to *sirop de groseille*, she invites several friends, who drink it with enjoyment. The effect of this *liqueur*, which is very pleasant to the palate, is not long in exhibiting itself, for it produces almost instant intoxication. Nevertheless the bowels do not suffer from it; while the fruit, eaten freely, causes such painful irritation and constipation as to

oblige the Indians to drink great quantities of horse fat, their only remedy in these cases.

I was held in so much consideration by the Mamouelches, that they made me take part in all their amusements and festivals: it was in this way that I had an opportunity of tasting their liquors. In spite of their good graces, evident proofs of the value they set upon my person, the joy which these Indians often displayed in my presence, reminded me still more forcibly of my sad position, and rendered more acute the recollection of my family and country. Bitter tears would then escape from my eyelids. Fortunately, the Indians deceived themselves as to their cause; they appeared to them to be the natural produce of drunkenness, and, flattered at the sight of what they thought was nothing but an instinct of imitation, they loaded me with their tobacco in sign of sympathy.

Sometimes they made me sing to them in my own language. Being unable to avoid obeying their desire, however strongly I wished to do so, I sang anything that came into my head; and as they often required me to translate what I had sung, I always did so to their advantage, by which means I left them under the impression that I felt the sincerest friendship for them.

During the time of my misfortunes, I was never so happy as in the midst of this tribe, where, in my quality of *tchilca-tuvey* (writer to the grand cacique), I enjoyed general consideration and a certain credit. At my request, I was authorized by Calfou-courah to construct for myself a little cabin of canes near his tent. He took pleasure in watching me execute this work, the daily progress of which he followed. This little habitation was so designed as to afford me all possible conveniences. It was square,

and divided into three compartments, one of which served me for a bed-chamber, another for a kitchen, and the last, which corresponded to the entrance-hall, held my saddle and hunting implements. I had woven a mat, which, tightly stretched upon a frame, served me for a bed, and I had raised the ground, so as to protect myself against dampness. The roof, flat and slightly inclined, I used as a terrace, to which I mounted by a ladder of cane, the steps of which were fixed with strips of lasso. In the kitchen I dug a sort of fireplace, above which I hung the meat I wished to roast. As I was a long way from any lake, I sank a well about two metres deep, into which water flowed abundantly. Calfoucourah often honoured me with his visits, and whenever he came to my dwelling, he was good enough to behave with as much kindness as when he visited his own friends; he never left without inquiring about everything of which I could

stand in need, to send it to me immediately.

His wives, then numbering thirty-two, were charged, as part of their duty, to furnish me with food, an attention which I was scrupulously careful to acknowledge by some slight acts of kindness, which won for me all their good graces.

Calfoucourah generally devoted to his numerous family the whole of his time not occupied by visitors and business. When he received company, he was mostly assisted by two of his wives—one young, the other aged. He shared his meals with the first, the other being employed in keeping his pipe constantly full and lighted. She went backwards and forwards without cessation, transmitting orders from one to another, and she saw to the distribution of the drink and food amongst the visitors. Calfoucourah was the father of numerous children, for each of his wives had given him sons and

daughters; but his great age not permitting him to be very assiduous in his attentions to those whom time had not yet withered, it resulted that their infidelities kept his jealousy constantly on the alert. As he enjoyed excellent sight, he stole noiselessly from his tent almost every night, and prowled about it, with the view of catching any of the delinquents. Whenever he succeeded, he struck them, as well as their accomplices, either with a knife or a boleadora. When he had served them in this manner, he returned into his tent, and went to sleep as if nothing extraordinary had occurred; but on the following morning he sent for the offenders, and had them brought before him: the woman received a severe reprimand, the man he condemned to pay a heavy ransom or to die.

In spite of his one hundred and three years of age, this old man rode a good deal, and mounted his horse almost as actively as

younger men. He was very fond of hunting, in which he still exhibited the greatest skill, and, when occasion required, handled the lance with as much dexterity as any one of his soldiers. When he was surrounded by a numerous auditory, his grave and sonorous voice, rising above the noise of the compact crowd, could be heard for several consecutive hours; he only paused time enough to inhale a few whiffs of tobacco.

From want of positive knowledge, as D'Orbigny himself has admitted, it has often been supposed that the Patagonian tongue is very limited, and even very rude; that it lacks terms for the complete expression of a thought, of a fixed idea, and still more of passion. This is a grave error. It must not be imagined that the hunters of whom I speak, although at one time isolated in virgin forests, at another thrown into the midst of boundless plains, are unacquainted with elegant

forms of language, and rich and varied figures of speech; they express themselves, on the contrary, according to circumstances, with much clearness and even poetry. How else could the indefatigable orators I have seen among the Patagonians, the Puelches, and also among the Pampeans and Mamouelches, like Calfoucourah, of whom I have spoken above, have so affected their hearers, and animated them by their discourses? Their language, it is true, is composed of only a limited number of words, of which some serve them to express all the objects that are constantly under their eyes; another set being simple conventional words which, intermixed with the others, and intercalated in different way, give expression to their thoughts, and always express them completely, without gaps or imperfections.

The Indians know perfectly well how to count; they employ nouns of number which they class by tens, like ourselves. They

reach in this way to a hundred, and from a hundred to a thousand, etc. Their units are:—

Quinié (one), opouh (two), colah (three), melly (four), quetchou (five), cayou (six), réulley (seven), pourah (eight), ailliah (nine), Mary (ten), mary-quinié (eleven), mary-opouh (twelve), mary-colao (thirteen), mary-melly (fourteen), mary-quétchou (fifteen), mary-cayou (sixteen), mary-reulley (seventeen), mary-pourah (eighteen), mary-ailliah (nineteen), opouh-mary (twenty).

Although they can neither read nor write, they solve almost instantaneously arithmetical calculations which would take us a long time to accomplish. For this purpose they use either blades of grass, small pieces of wood of different lengths, or still oftener stones of various sizes. The shortest or smallest represent units, the longest or largest stand for tens; and they are never wrong in their reckonings, however intri-

cate they may be. They teach this science to their children at the earliest age, so that, thanks to their prodigious memory, men, women, and children, without exception, are capable of astonishing our best calculators.

They count the years from one winter to another; they call them *tchipandos*, and subdivide them into moons, which they name *quiènes*. If they wish to speak of the moon in which they then are, they say *tefa-tchi-quiène*; or of the coming moon, they say, *quiène-oulah*. In place of hours, they calculate past or passing time by the course of the sun; morning or dawn, they call *pouh-liouène*; noon or mid-day, *renny-enneteu*; evening, *épey-poune*; night, *poune*. Notwithstanding these facilities for reckoning the exact duration of their lives, the Indians do not trouble themselves about the matter; it is only done for the caciques of each respective tribe. They have also some little knowledge of

astronomy, and are perfectly able to find their way in the night by the help of the stars, to which they give particular names. This study aided me in my flight.

CHAPTER X.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS OF THE INDIANS.

AT certain periods of the year the Indians keep religious festivals. The first takes place in the summer, and is consecrated to Vita-ouènetrou (the God of goodness), for the purpose of thanking him for all his past favours, and of begging him to continue them in the future.

It is generally the grand cacique who fixes the date and duration of the festival. Acting upon his orders, all the chiefs of the tribes bring together the people under their command, either in their respective localities or at some stated place.

The preparations are made with all the religious pomp of which they are capable ; the

Indians grease their hair and paint their faces with greater care than usual. The garments of the rich, during these high days, are composed of all the articles they have stolen from the Christians, for which purpose they have been preserved with the utmost care. Some are dressed in shirts, which they wear over the cloaks which cover their bodies; others, having no shirts, wear with pride, and to the admiration of all, a worn-out Spanish cloak or a very short waistcoat, without the accompanying trousers; while others, again, dressed in trousers only—and those often with the hind-side before—wear on their heads képis without peaks, or high-crowned hats, and on their feet sometimes one boot, sometimes one shoe. Nothing is more comic than these strange accoutrements, worn by men whose habitual gravity is maintained as long as the festival lasts—laughter being expressly forbidden during the whole time of its continuance.

At the commencement of the ceremony, the women move their tents provisionally to the centre of the spot chosen by the cacique. The men do not arrive until these preparations are finished; they ride three times round the place at full gallop, shouting their war-cry and shaking their lances. These three rides ended, they range themselves in single file, and tilt their lances with such perfect regularity as to make it a striking sight. The women afterwards take the places of their husbands, who, after dismounting and tying up their horses, form a second rank behind them.

The dance then commences, without change of place, except from right to left. The women sing in a plaintive tone, accompanying themselves by striking on a wooden drum covered with wild-cat skin, and decorated with colours and designs similar to those on their faces. The men pirouette, limping upon the opposite leg to that of the

women, and blowing with all their might into pieces of hollowed rush, giving the shrill and ear-splitting sound of a large key.

This *ensemble* produces a most original effect, from the contrariety of the movements executed, and the angularity of the dancers. At a signal given by the *cacique* presiding over the festival, cries of alarm are raised, the men spring into their saddles, abruptly interrupting the dance to take part in a fantastic cavalcade round the site of the festival, all waving their weapons, and raising the sinister cry they utter in their pillages.

In the intervals of these exciting diversions everybody goes visiting, in the hope of tasting a little rotted milk kept in a horse-hide; it is a most dainty dish, according to their notion, producing, however, the pleasant effect of a copious dose of medicine.

At a very early hour on the fourth day, to close the ceremony, a young horse, an ox, and two sheep, given by the richest men

amongst them, are sacrificed to their God. After they have been thrown upon the ground, the head turned towards the east, the cacique names a man to make an opening in the chest of each victim, and tear out the heart, which, still palpitating, is hung upon a lance inclined towards the rising sun. The whole crowd, eager and curious, watch with fixed eyes the blood which flows from a wide incision made in this organ, drawing from it auguries which are almost always favourable to themselves. After that they return to their place of habitation, believing that God, highly satisfied with their conduct, will assist them in all their enterprises.

The second festival takes place in the autumn; it is celebrated in honour of Houacouvou (director of the evil spirits). The object of it is to conjure him to preserve them from all enchantment.

As in the first festival, the Indians dress

themselves in their best, and assemble by tribes only, each headed by its cacique. An assemblage of all the cattle takes place *en masse*. The men form a double circle around, galloping unceasingly in opposite directions, so that none of these unruly animals may escape. They invoke Houacouvou aloud, throwing down, drop by drop, fermented milk out of bull's-horns handed to them by their wives while they are riding round the cattle. After repeating this ceremony three or four times, they sprinkle the horses and oxen with whatever remains of the milk, with the view, they say, of preserving them from all maladies; this done, each man separates his own cattle, and drives it to some distance, then returns for the purpose of assembling round the cacique, who, in a long and fervid address, advises them never to forget Houacouvou in their prayers, and to lose no time in preparing themselves to please him, by carrying desolation amongst the Christians, and increasing

the number of their own flocks and herds. Everybody recognizing the wisdom of such advice, waves his weapons while beseeching Houacouvou to bless them, and make them in their hands instruments of happiness to their tribes, and death to the Christians who attempt to dispute with them their goods or their lives.

These beings have no feeling of pity ; the more victims they make the prouder they become. They look upon civilized beings as sorcerers and enemies. They accuse them of being the cause of all the ills that befall them.

Before the appearance of *ouignecaës*, they say, we lived peaceably in all parts of the land that has been forcibly taken from us, without any respect for the will of God who caused us to be born in it, and gave it to us, to be our own property. To whom do these oxen and horses—natives like ourselves of this country—belong, if not to us ? Téouas-

ouigneçaës (these dogs of Christians) have not spared us ; not only have they despoiled us of our possessions, but, in their hunger for gold, they have not feared to bathe their hands in our blood. They will for ever be our enemies ; we shall struggle with them to the death, until we get back by degrees what they robbed us of at one stroke. Why have these dogs of Christians dared to come here instead of remaining in their own country ? God commands us to harass their tranquillity, and oppose the success of their projects ; he commands us to seize their wives and children, and to make them our slaves.

Such are the opinions of these beings whom we call savages.

The Indians believe in talismans. They consider and preserve as such many insignificant objects, as balls of hardened hair which they find in the bodies of oxen, or the masses of gravel which form themselves in the

kidneys of those horses which have, mostly, nothing but calcareous water to drink. The high chief, Calfoucourah, carries about with him a very curious relic, which he found when a young child. It is a small blue stone, the name of which he bears, to which nature had been pleased to give an almost human form ; the superstition of the Indians induces them to regard it as a talisman. According to them, Houacouvou caused it to fall into his hands, that it might preserve him from all danger, and render him invincible. To it they attribute all the success of Calfoucourah. What confirms them in this belief is the really exceptional organization of the chief, and his intelligence, very superior to that of all the other caciques, who agree in saying that they shall not be able to replace him. Even the Hispano-Americans, to whom he has done so much harm, recognize and admire his bravery and abnormal capacity.

This man, I am convinced, would not have

been the enemy of civilization, for he was gifted with generous instincts. He had the sentiment of justice, but unfortunately for the Argentines, to whom his submission would have been the source of great riches, their want of skill and inconsistency in policy have warped his friendly disposition. To preserve complete authority over the wild beings he commanded, and may still command, perhaps, he was obliged to repress all the better feelings of his heart. However, I owe my life to him ; and the day when he saved me, by overruling the demands of those who had sworn to kill me, was not the only proof I received of his generosity.

Many times during my sojourn with him, when we were alone together, he employed a very different kind of language from that which he used before witnesses, and lavished on me marks of the greatest sympathy. He made me understand perfectly that I must not take it to heart when he was rough

with me, for that it was often but the result of violence done to himself in resisting the desire to be of use to me, which was incompatible with his position, and with the surveillance kept over him by the other Indians ; he added that, if ever I regained my liberty through any unforeseen circumstances, he earnestly hoped that I would remember him as a sincere friend. I must say, however, that in spite of all his pretty speeches and marks of sympathy, which I was obliged to receive with an appearance of blind credulity, I well knew that the most implacable hatred alone would find a place in this Indian's heart, if I suffered him to see the eager desire I felt to regain my freedom.

Nevertheless, I affected to appear very grateful for all his kind attentions, at the same time trying to merit them so long as I remained with him. To give him a proof of this, I one day proposed to him to sow a whole sack of maize which had been carried

off in an expedition into Buenos Ayres. This offer pleased him immensely; we chose together a suitable spot, and, every morning at dawn, I went to work. First, I dug a ditch, wide enough to prevent the cattle getting into the field.

Calfoucquarah came two or three times every day, watching my work and encouraging me. He made me smoke his pipe, and called me his son. When I had completed the ditch, which was at least one metre fifty wide, and two metres deep, he took me with him into a *roukah*, and, after having made me partake of his meal, presented me with a cloak; though half worn out, this article caused me the greatest delight, for it was the first piece of clothing I had possessed since the commencement of my captivity.

I had already done a good deal in digging the ditch, but my greatest difficulty was to find a means of breaking up this hitherto untilled ground. To do this I needed a

plough. I should, no doubt, have been reduced to the necessity of turning up the earth with my clumsy spade, and should have made but very slow progress with that fatiguing labour, if I had not had the good fortune to find in the neighbourhood an old hatchet, which I was able to sharpen. With the help of this instrument I cut down a small tree, one of the branches of which grew at an acute angle with the trunk, the extremity of which I cut into the form of a share. Amongst the cattle were two draught oxen, which I harnessed as well as I could to this rough plough. By perseverance I succeeded tolerably in ploughing the field, which was about five hundred square metres. When I had sown the corn, I loaded a stout ox-hide with stones, to which I harnessed three horses, and used it instead of a harrow. Nature having taken care to do the rest, I soon saw a large quantity of stems of maize spring up, which in a short time gave a mag-

nificent crop. This success completely secured me the friendship and good graces of Calfoucourah, and of his thirty-two wives, who appeared to redouble their attentions and kindness.

One day, when about to kill an ox with a single blow of a sharp-pointed knife in the nape of the neck, as I was in the habit of doing, the lasso by which he was fastened snapped; I missed my stroke, and was trampled by the furious and wounded animal, from under which I was with difficulty dragged, bleeding and bruised. While he belaboured my body with his horns I had lost consciousness; when I recovered my senses I was lying on sheep-skins, my head resting on the knees of one of the grand cacique's wives, who lavished on me the tenderest care, and seemed, as well as all the Indians by whom I was surrounded, delighted to see me returned to life.

I was some time recovering from the

consequences of this terrible accident, in which I was very nearly losing an eye, for I had one eyelid torn.

Notwithstanding all the obliging attentions of the Indians, and all my diplomacy, I was not completely safe from their ill-treatment; for the superstition and fickleness of these suspicious beings often drove them to make me expiate what, in their angry moments, they called their inexcusable weakness regarding me.

Though it was not Calfoucourah's habit to be accompanied when he travelled, except by his sons or by me, he none the less received with marks of the greatest satisfaction all those who presented themselves to act as escort to him.

In consequence of his great age, this chief rarely himself led the Indians to pillage. He contented himself with giving them his orders or advice to overrun one place rather than another. But when, occasionally, he

allowed himself to be carried away by his bellicose impulses, and led his soldiers, he took with him his principal valuables, consisting of silver spurs and stirrups, and the greater part of his wives. There ended all distinction between himself and the common Indians, who alone took part in the combat. His rights did not go so far as to entitle him to take any portion whatever of the plunder; but as he was generally beloved and venerated, every one made it his pride to offer him presents of the most beautiful animals carried off, or still oftener to give him some of their captives, which he generally sold at a low price to Indians belonging to distant tribes.

Calfoucourah inhabited a vast tent abundantly supplied with all things that conduce to make the Indian comfortable; and under his fragile roof a European would certainly have found a great deal of riches thrown carelessly together.

I had lived for upwards of six months with this man, when the Indians felt anew the necessity of treating with one or other of the Hispano-American political parties, whose watchfulness, becoming more and more active, threw increasing difficulties in the way of their terrible invasions.

They ventured to make pacific advances towards both, the result greatly influencing my destiny.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW THE POLICY OF THE UNITED PROVINCES OF
LA PLATA INFLUENCED MY DESTINY—GENERAL
URQUIZA—DELIVERANCE—AN ORGIE.

FORTUNATELY for the united republics of La Plata, they then had at their head a man on whom I shall arrest the eyes of the reader for an instant, were it only to recompense him for the grinning, grotesque, or hideous faces I have hitherto described.

Don Justo-José Urquiza, born at Concepcion de l'Uruguay, in the Entre-Rios, is entirely a self-made man. Sprung from the ranks of the people, a simple gaucho, as he is proud of declaring, having never received any instruction besides that of his own expe-

rience, he has little by little cleared a path for himself by the strength of his character and the superiority of his intelligence. His rare military talents secured him the favour of Rosas, who advanced him rapidly and soon made him his right-hand man. . Urquiza believed for a time that the Dictator only opposed Confederation to enable himself to accomplish some great end, perhaps to save the independence of his country. But he was not long in unravelling the motives of that crafty and distrustful policy. As soon as he perceived that his patriotism was taken advantage of, in order to benefit a narrow personal ambition, he turned against the Dictator, accusing him of violating the Constitution and of attempting to overthrow the national liberties. Rosas had many times feigned a disinterestedness which he was far from feeling. At skilfully calculated periods he spoke with truly touching modesty, sometimes of his advanced age,

sometimes of his shattered health, and asked to be allowed to resign a power of which, he said, he could no longer bear the burden. But the old lion who had always seen the representatives tremble before him, well knew that none of them would dare to accept his resignation. The assembly was accustomed to implore his devotion, and to wring from him, by ardent supplication, a glorious sacrifice.

These empty adulations passed in foreign courts for the expression of public sentiment. Urquiza chose the moment when, in 1851, the Dictator attempted to repeat this shameless piece of acting; he issued a proclamation in which he declared Rosas to be stripped of the executive power, and placed himself at the head of a party seeking at once the reunion of the provinces in one confederation, and the free navigation of the waters of La Plata.

He had assured himself beforehand of

the support of Brazil, the dearest interests of which country were served by his policy. The rivers having their sources in the north of that empire afforded access, by means of the Atlantic, to a considerable portion of its territory, including some of its richest provinces. Brazil had often demanded of Rosas the passage of the Plata. To obtain this concession it had in vain exhausted all the resources of diplomacy. Urquiza came *à propos*. The traditional antagonism of the Spaniards and Portuguese gave way before the necessity of opening to the commerce of the world the Parana, the Uruguay, the Paraguay, and their tributaries.

Brazil rallied to the cause of Urquiza, and furnished him with whatever was required to insure its triumph. The first movement of Urquiza was directed against Oribe, who, sustained by the troops of Rosas, had for nine years blockaded Monte Video, and only waited the moment when the intervention of France and

England should cease to take possession of it. Meanwhile, Oribe was ruining Monte Video, for he had, by small degrees, raised about his camp a rival city, Restoracione, which already numbered ten thousand inhabitants. The arrival of Urquiza relieved the besieged from any danger in the future. He presented himself at the head of an army of Entre-Rios and Corrientinos; supported by the Brazilian squadron, and by an infantry corps belonging to the same country, he brought Oribe to capitulate without firing a shot. His conduct was marked by consummate skill; he put prominently forward the patriotic character of his enterprise, and showed the most conciliating disposition, earnestly proclaiming his intention of sparing the effusion of blood. Thousands of combatants passed over to his ranks; Oribe, abandoned by his troops, and unable to receive either reinforcements or munitions, surrendered unconditionally.

After this striking success, Urquiza retired to his province, there to prepare for the delivery of a decisive blow at the power of Rosas. In 1852, he recrossed the Parana with considerable forces, and advanced without meeting with any obstacle, as far as Monte Caseros, whither the Dictator hurried at the head of twenty thousand men. The memorable battle of the 3rd of February, 1852, ended with the defeat and flight of Rosas, who embarked in haste on board an English vessel, while his conqueror entered Buenos Ayres amid the acclamations of the population. Urquiza established his headquarters at Palermo, and named as Governor of the city Don Vincente Lopez, a man of advanced age, but generally loved and esteemed.

Named Provisional Dictator on the 14th of May, Urquiza assembled the governors and delegates of the fourteen provinces of La Plata, that they might choose a political organization. This assembly pronounced

itself in favour of the federative system, and decided that the provinces should name representatives empowered to arrange a constitution and establish the bases of a definitive government.

Buenos Ayres refused to confirm the powers which the assembly had conferred on Urquiza. Governor Lopez, who remained faithful to the decisions of the majority, failing to make them respected, was obliged to resign. Urquiza was not a man to hesitate; he marched on Buenos Ayres, re-established his authority, and reinstalled its governor. After this act of vigour, he showed himself merciful, and confined himself to exiling five of the principal ringleaders; as soon as he saw order assured, he withdrew his troops from the city, and went to Santa Fé, where the congress assembled, which opened its sittings on the 20th of August. The thirteen provinces of Entre-Rios, Corrientes, Santa

Fé, Cordova, Mendoza, Santiago de l'Estero, Tucuman, Salta, Jujuy, Catamarca, Hioja, San Luiz, and San Juan, had each sent two delegates.

A fresh revolt broke out at Buenos Ayres, fomented by former exiles who had joined Urquiza only for the purpose of getting rid of Rosas. As they were for the most part natives of the city, they had no difficulty in raising the population. Urquiza could not suffer Buenos Ayres to dictate to the thirteen provinces, but he would not furnish any pretext for a civil war, the consequences of which he dreaded. Instead, therefore, of employing force against the insurrection, he preferred to allow it time for reflection, and contented himself with publishing a proclamation, in which he declared the province of Buenos Ayres separated from the rest of the Confederation, and abandoned it to its evil destiny. His moderation only served to encourage the insurgents, who tried to propa-

gate revolution, and invaded the province of Entre-Rios. This was braving Urquiza in his stronghold. He marched against the invaders, and drove them back to their own territory.

From that time to the present (1868), there has been between Urquiza, representing the interests of the Argentine Confederation, tending to the unification of its immense territory, and the selfish prejudices of Buenos Ayres, dreaming of a proud isolation for its hundred thousand inhabitants, nothing but a series of more or less open encounters, followed by concessions, always compulsory and insincere on the part of the Portenos, or Buenos Ayrians, but always voluntary on the part of Urquiza, who has shown himself on all occasions desirous of sparing the ancient metropolis of La Plata the unhappy extremities of war.

It is in the following terms that Commander Page, entrusted by the United States

with a mission to La Plata, traced in 1857 the portrait of this remarkable man :—At the time I saw him, Urquiza was still young in appearance ; his complexion brown, his height medium, admirably proportioned, he presented all the outward signs of an energetic and vigorous nature. His head was remarkable for its amplitude of form, solid structure, and strongly marked features. The *ensemble* spoke of intelligence, but of intelligence fully under control. His bright, frank eyes, shone with a look of penetration ; his mouth was shrewd and at the same time good-natured. His head was at once that of a statesman and a hero, exhibiting a singular combination of strength, calmness, and authority. Urquiza never resorted to charlatanism or borrowed part to inspire respect ; there was nothing studied in his appearance, and he conveyed the impression of being thoroughly equal to his mission. His noble deportment, easy manner, deliberate move-

ments, combined with his simple and earnest language, denoted a proud and honest soul, a clear intellect, a keen judgment. All who came within the influence which he exercised over everybody about him, submitted to it willingly, and felt the more pleasure in recognizing the rare qualities with which he was gifted, from knowing that he owed all to himself—his education as well as his high position.

A few words will now suffice to show in what manner my deliverance was accidentally connected with the profound political calculations of this statesman.

In 1859, a fresh armed rupture with Buenos Ayres once more compelled Urquiza to recur to the decision of the battle-field.

The Indians foreseeing, with their bird-of-prey-like instinct, that the political dissensions of the Argentines might afford them some opportunities for plunder, sent several offers of alliance to the general, and

several letters written by me were carried by members of Calfoucourah's family.

The general was too acute a politician not to give a good reception to these savage messengers. Owner of one of the largest estancias in the Parana valley, and himself a distinguished writer on agriculture; desirous above all things to develop the benefits of agriculture in the beautiful land confided to his care; he knew too well how much the agricultural establishments of the southern frontier needed quiet and security, not to seek by every means to destroy the aggressive tendencies of their Indian neighbours. He therefore sent back the ambassadors of Calfoucourah laden with presents of all kinds, but, above all, with barrels of brandy: thus, their return was to the whole horde, without exception of rank, age, or sex, the signal of endless orgies.

Seeing them given up to wild intoxication, and estimating the length of time they

might continue in this state, I conceived the idea of once more attempting to reach a country whence I might effect my return to my own land and family.

At the moment of taking this solemn resolution, remembering that the portraits of my dear parents were still at the mercy of the Indians, I resolved at all risks to carry them off, looking on them as a talisman that would protect me in the midst of the new perils I was about to face. To carry out this daring purpose, I was obliged to crawl on my hands and knees into the midst of the whole drunken and raving horde, exposed to the threats of some, and parrying as I best could the blows of knives aimed at me by others, who neither knew what I was seeking nor recognized me. When, at length, I put my hand upon the bag in which the portraits were kept, my heart beat wildly, and for a moment I felt as much afraid of being detected as if I had

been engaged in some guilty act ; my blood ran cold. I no longer knew whether I ought to go forward or return ; but after remaining perfectly motionless for several minutes, and being convinced that I had not been seen, I opened as softly as I could the wretched horse-hide bag, the creaking dryness of which nearly betrayed me. Without loss of time I inserted a trembling hand, and quickly seized the photographs, which I hid under the cloak in which I was wrapped. Emboldened by this first exploit, I was in a moment out of the tent, and more than ever decided on flight.

I implored the assistance of the Omnipotent from the depths of my heart, and taking advantage of this night, when the whole tribe were plunged in heavy sleep, I crawled to the place where the best horses of the cacique were, after having provided myself with a boleadora, to serve either for my defence or to procure game on my jour-

ney. I also took a lasso to tie together the three horses I carried off. These preliminaries noiselessly accomplished, I gently led my horses until I was out of sight of the camp; then springing on one of them, while driving the others before me, I began, trembling with emotion, my last ride, on which depended my life or death.

During the whole night I galloped without resting, ceaselessly imagining that I saw shadows in pursuit of me. Morning dissipated the darkness, but without calming my agitation, which was so intense, that the least breath of wind seemed to me to be filled with sinister sounds, and the least uprising of dust caused me agonies of alarm.

I often dismounted, and, with my ear to the ground, listened, hoping to gain a little calmness from the silence of the Pampas; but, instead of doing so, my ears so tingled, that I thought I heard the threatening gal-

lop of horses on the hard soil, and hurried on again without reflecting on the imperious wants of the horse I was riding, which was unable to follow the example of his companions, who snatched a few mouthfuls of grass as they went along. I kept as nearly as possible to the grassy parts of the desert, so as to throw off the scent the Indians by whom I should inevitably be followed, but who would vainly search for my track in grass that had sprung up afresh under the influence of the morning dew.

Not having taken any provisions with me, I was beginning to suffer cruelly from hunger and thirst, when I was at length able to bring down a young she-gama. My terror was such that, so as not to delay my flight in the least degree by pausing to cook my game, I tied it round me with my lasso, and devoured the whole of it raw while I galloped onwards.

This wild ride had already lasted four

days, when the horse on which I was mounted fell : it was dead.

Reasonably fearing to lose in the same manner the two which still remained to me, and on which my safety depended, I took the precaution, from that time, of allowing them to rest a part of the night ; this greatly retarded my progress, though the idea of being pursued, which was fixed in my mind, made me, in spite of myself, stimulate them during the day.

In one of these resting moments, while, with anxious eyes and quickened ears, I was trying to pierce the darkness that surrounded me, or to catch the least unfavourable sound, I fancied I heard the barking of a dog, which soon became louder, and left me no room for doubt. Seized with terror, thinking naturally that this dog must be in advance of the Indians, I hastily sprang upon one of my horses, and, driving the other before me, rode off at full gallop.

But, after going a short distance, having a hill to ascend, these unfortunate animals, already distressed, refused to advance beyond a walk. This gave the dog I had heard time to come up with me. He had hardly reached me before he exhibited the greatest joy. What was my surprise to recognize it as a poor dog which I had succeeded in taming, and with which I had often shared my meals! His attachment was so great, that he had been accustomed to accompany me in all my excursions. He had, no doubt, followed me from the moment of my setting forth, but my absorbed state of mind and the rapidity of my flight had prevented my noticing him sooner. Completely reassured, I again halted—this time to allow my horses to rest longer than they had yet done.

When they had eaten and drunk sufficiently, I continued my dangerous journey, during which my dog and I were condemned

to live solely on the produce of our hunting, which we devoured raw.

After another space of time which I cannot precisely determine, for all the days and all the hours resembled each other, fatigue and the want of water deprived me of a second horse. I could have wished not to have had to abandon it, and to have tended it either until it recovered or died; but the disheartening nature of the soil left me no alternative, since, by staying with it, I also exposed myself to the loss of my last horse, which had so far resisted all trials.

I left my poor beast with an aching heart, decided to take the greatest care of my horse and my dog, my last companions in misery. I refrained from exacting any effort from them. We were advancing very slowly, exhausted with hunger and thirst, when, at close of day, I remarked that, of his own accord, my horse quickened his speed. By the freshness of the ground he was

treading, and with the instinct natural to all dwellers in these vast deserts, the poor animal had felt the neighbourhood of water.

A few minutes afterwards we quenched our common thirst in the lakes into which, in the north of the Pampas, are collected the streams poured down from the lower range of the Andes to the provinces of Mendoza and San Luiz. Around these basins, thick and plentiful grass allowed my poor steed to recover his strength. Thanks for this unhoped-for provender, he was able to bear me as far as Rio Quinto, where, less fortunate than my dog, he sank entirely worn out; I also, at the end of my strength, dying of hunger, and of physical and moral fatigue, fell motionless and speechless.

It was the thirteenth day of my flight! I cannot fix the date, but it was towards the middle of 1859.

God, who had thus far deigned to protect me, permitted me to be discovered in that

position by a worthy Spanish family residing in Rio Quinto, who, taking pity on my sufferings, hastened to lift me up, and carried me to their house.

CHAPTER XII.

STAY AT RIO QUINTO—DEPARTURE FOR MENDOZA.

RIO QUINTO is not a town, but simply a small village, situated on the river of that name, half-way on the road from Rosario to Saint Luiz; that is to say, seventy-five leagues from either place. It does not contain more than from five to six hundred inhabitants, for the most part sheltered in ill-built houses. They employ themselves in the breeding and sale of cattle. Some are tradespeople, and keep *porperias* or *almacènas* (shops), in which are found heaped together articles of food or clothing, from vegetables to silk dresses. Others make exchanges with the Indians to

whom Urquiza gives permission to enter the place.

The day after my installation in the house of the persons who had picked me up, I was seized with a long and painful illness, which kept me to my bed more than six weeks, during which time I was delirious.

In spite of all the difficulties they experienced in approaching me—for my dog, still almost wild, would not quit me for a single instant—my hosts lavished on me the most anxious and touching care. They could not have shown for me more solicitude if I had been one of their relatives.

When I became convalescent, they seized every occasion to procure amusement for me; but, in spite of their efforts, I remained in a feeble condition, my so long over-excited and tortured mind being unable to regain its quiet. I was constantly, as it were, under the influence of a terrible nightmare, in which all the horrible circumstances of my

life of slavery, during which I had been night and day exposed to the chance of a tragic end, repassed before my eyes. Sometimes it was the recollection of the many assassinations I had seen accomplished by the Indians under my eyes, or, oftener, of circumstances under which I had been obliged to exercise the greatest coolness and energy in struggling with my murderers. When these horrible visions left my sight, and calmness returned to my exhausted senses, I felt incapable of speech or action. My weakness was such that the sound of my own voice caused me a sort of surprise and melancholy, for the use of speech was at least as new to me as the enjoyment of that dear liberty, after which I had sighed and wept so often.

When I felt myself a little strengthened morally and physically, I thought of how I might, as far as I could, recognize the generosity of my hosts, and prove my gratitude

to them. As they were tradespeople, and as I saw them selling a large quantity of coarse soap of their own making, I proposed their establishing a factory such I had seen in the environs of Buenos Ayres, myself to superintend the manufacture by a process which until that time they had not employed.

This offer having appeared to them infinitely promising, I used the greatest activity in its realization.

I got a native builder to construct a large furnace, with two boilers and a tank. The boilers with taps, which I had sent for from Buenos Ayres, were very small; but this defect I supplemented by having strong tubs made of hard wood, of the same diameter, perfectly adjusted to each, on to which they were cemented. Half-way down the tank, which was constructed of bricks, I formed a filter of open boards, covered with a layer of straw. I caused to be brought from

Cordova the ashes of a wood the Spaniards call *pale de fume*. This wood, burnt while it is green, gives a crystalline ash, containing a very large quantity of potash, the separation of which is easily effected with the help of slaked lime.

When I had these materials at my command, I placed on the filter of the tank, first a layer of the ashes, then a layer of lime, until it was filled, and poured over the whole as much water as it would hold. Beneath the tank I had had a receiver made of the same holding capacity, into which the liquefied potash fell. In default of a lye-test, I made use of an egg to try the strength of this mixture, to which the Spaniards give the name of *lessive* (lye). I put into the boilers sufficient water to prevent the fat, raw and in strips, with which I filled the tubs, from sticking to the bottom. Then I lighted a large fire. The grease, which I stirred with a pole, melted slowly; when it

was completely dissolved, I put out the fire, so as to allow it to cool by the following morning. Before again heating it, I drew off the potash of the preceding evening, which carried with it, in the form of dregs, all the fibrous tissue from the then purified grease. I poured into my tubs a larger quantity of potash than on the preceding day, and kept the mixture boiling for a whole day. Thanks to the acid, I soon saw the grease change in appearance, and take, first the form of a paste, finally that of a jelly, indicating to me that I had obtained a successful result. I then put out the fire, and with pails, put the soap into enormous wooden moulds, divided in two in the inside with zinc in the form of parallelograms. When it was completely cooled, I cut it into slabs of various thicknesses, which, in turn, were divided into a certain number of cakes.

My first trial surpassed the expectation

of Juan José, my host, and that of his family, who readily disposed of this product, the success of which was very great.

After a time, delighted with the service I had rendered him, my dear and generous host, seeing that it would be easy for him to increase his fortune by this new manufacture, warmly pressed me to retain the management, and to enter into partnership with him. In spite of the agreeable prospect which this offer held out to me, I was obliged to decline it. During the whole time of my residence at Rio Quinto, I was constantly and evidently watched by Indians, who succeeded each other without cessation, and whose object was to sacrifice me to their vengeance. I often met them during the day; they never addressed me but to threaten me with death. It was true they dare not attempt to put their threats into execution in the open day, but often during the night they climbed the walls behind which I was

sheltered. On one or two occasions I owed my life to the barking of my faithful dog, for they were breaking open my door.

To have stayed longer at Rio Quinto would have been to sacrifice my existence. Thus I was compelled definitively to renounce all idea of fortune, and, in spite of my sorrow, to depart abruptly from my benefactors, whose persuasion might have overcome my resolution. Two days after my departure, I sent them a letter of farewell, dated from Atchiras. I assured them of my profound gratitude, and explained the powerful motive which obliged me to separate myself from them; for the extreme kindness of these foreigners made me feel for Don Juan and all his family a warm gratitude which will never be effaced from my memory, and I shall be happy if these humble lines should reach them across the ocean.

I started, almost without resources and

on foot, in company with Chilène, my dog. I had to travel one hundred and thirty-two leagues before reaching the capital of the Andes, and had still innumerable dangers to face ; and, moreover, ran the risk of being retaken by the Indians, from whose hands I had escaped with so much difficulty.

As a measure of precaution, I travelled during the night only, hiding by day in the burrows of viscachas or amongst rocks. I suffered greatly from fatigue, thirst, and hunger throughout the journey, which, doubtless, I should not have been able to accomplish if I had not had the good fortune to find on my road several hamlets and the town of San Luiz, the inhabitants of which treated me with the most cordial hospitality. I had still a great deal to suffer on the long journey from San Luiz to Mendoza, in the course of which I found hardly sufficient water to slake my thirst, and during which I did not meet a single living soul.

At length, after a difficult walk of sixteen days, I came in sight of Mendoza.

It was time that I reached the end of my journey, for my shoes and clothes, more than half-worn out at my departure, threatened to fall from me bit by bit.

CHAPTER XIII.

MENDOZA.

How shall I describe the various emotions that assailed me when, exhausted by fatigue and want, I one evening entered Mendoza ?

It was about eight o'clock. The greatest quiet reigned in all the streets, along which I wandered at hazard. I walked with slow and tottering steps. From my appearance and miserable dress, many Europeans would have looked on me as a despicable being, sinking under the effects of some low debauchery. My strength was nearly used up ; courage only, and the hope of finding some one of whom I might ask assistance, still sustained me.

Wandering from street to street, I reached the most aristocratic, in which the light shining from richly-curtained windows guided my feeble steps. Sounds of merry voices fell on my ears and, profoundly penetrating my heart, awakened all my recollections. Led by an irresistible longing, I approached the house whence these sounds appeared to proceed. Through curtains of light and rich muslin, my envious gaze penetrated into a sumptuous interior, in which a numerous company was assembled. I know not how long my hungry looks wandered from one to another in the vain hope of discovering amongst them some old friend, when skilful fingers executed on the piano the *Réveil des Fées*, a piece I had often heard played by my beloved sister.

It produced within me, during those brief moments, a revolution which recalled all my past happiness; my strength deserted me; I sank down upon the ground, my eyes over-

flowing with tears, to which succeeded a painful sleep.

When I awoke, it seemed to be from a dream both delightful and distressing. Profound darkness about me, I was lying on the ground near the house, from which all the visitors had departed without perceiving me. Worn out, and not knowing whither to direct my steps anew, I waited for daylight, which shortly appeared. I was fortunate enough to pass a house where French was spoken. I entered. When I had related part of my misfortunes, both men and women gave me an affecting welcome, and immediately supplied all my principal wants.

Many times I have said to myself in the course of my sufferings, where is the Frenchman in the bosom of his own country, who would believe in the possibility of such misfortunes as numbers of his countrymen are exposed to in a land like South America, which he believes to be civilized, and even used up?

The city of Mendoza was situated, as is well known, at the foot of the Andes. It was, like the country surrounding it, watered by a multitude of canals, fed by the Rio Mendoza—a river which then bounded the western side of the city. On the eastern side of the rapid stream commenced a small canal or trench, of from six to eight feet wide, supplying the whole city with water, running alongside of the Alaméda, a vast boulevard, planted on either side with a double row of poplars, which gave to this public promenade a majestic and delightful aspect. Every evening during the fine season it was crowded by a numerous and aristocratic society, dressed with equal taste and luxury.

This charming sight contrasted singularly with the deserted and silent appearance of the city during the day. Everybody, from the richest to the poorest, gave themselves up during the daytime to the pleasures of a

siesta, which lasted generally from noon to five o'clock. During those hours hardly anybody was to be seen, besides a few women carelessly seated at their windows in the completest *deshabille*. Only towards five o'clock, when the sun began to lose its power, the population, as if suddenly awaking from sleep, bestirred itself.

There were to be seen, mingling with the crowd that thronged the streets, gauchos on horseback, selling right and left fruit of all kinds; or beggars, also on horseback, stopping at doors and windows, claiming public assistance by singing psalms in nasal and lamentable tones. Lastly, grotesque idiots went about, with whom the children amused themselves by showering upon them eatables of all sorts, and watching their dreary and repulsive buffooneries. All the streets were perfectly straight, and kept extremely clean; the houses were very low and somewhat mean externally, but generally furnished

with great luxury. Several remarkable churches were to be seen in the neighbourhood of the Place de la Victoire, in the middle of which rose a fountain and a column.

But what use is there in here depicting that superb city, which, after having awakened in my mind so many pictures of happiness, so many thoughts of blessing and gratitude, can now evoke none but sad images and bitter regrets.

There, in the profoundest security, lived twenty thousand souls whose tranquil existence the rest of the world might have envied; it was the gentlest, the happiest, and the most hospitable population of the American continent. On the 19th of March, 1861, the Argentine poets still called it Mendoza the pearl, the queen of the flowery zone spread at the eastern foot of the Andes; the next day Death passed over this paradise. "A few seconds," says one

writer, "sufficed to convert its smiling habitations, its gardens, its churches, its colleges, attended by the youth of the neighbouring provinces—the work of three centuries, in short—into a dreadful necropolis, into a hideous heap of ruins, into a chaos of rocks, earth, bricks, and broken beams."

According to geological writers, the earthquake which doomed Mendoza to the fate of Herculaneum, the shock of which was felt along the line extending from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres—that is to say, over eighteen hundred kilometres—was not, like the terrible phenomenon of '70, brought about by the re-opening of a long-closed volcano, but solely by the dilation of a mass of elastic fluids given off by the central fire, and projected by it into the immense cavities of the earth's crust. From whatever cause, they had doubtless suddenly accumulated at the crossing of several of these subterranean gulfs. Above the roof of the vault, dislocated by

the pressure of the fluids, was Mendoza. Hence its entire ruin.

How strange! It is said that upon this shapeless heap of *débris*, on this frightful winding-sheet spread over fifteen thousand human victims, vegetation alone has remained standing, and flowers continued to thrive and smile in the midst of the pestilential emanations that arise from this immense sepulchre.

The weeping-willow was the favourite tree of the Mendozians; it was to be seen everywhere amongst them; it was the chosen ornament of their gardens, their squares, their promenades; it shadowed the open courts of their hospitable dwellings, always open to the travellers. At this moment, like the grateful remembrance of them which I cherish, it bends and weeps over the dead.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEPARTURE FROM MENDOZA—PASSAGE OF THE
CORDILLERAS—SOJOURN IN CHILI—RETURN TO
FRANCE.

THE desire to return to my country, my anxieties on the subject of my family, of whom I had had no news since my departure from France, and the bad state of my health, which needed care I was unable to give myself, from the complete state of poverty in which I was plunged, suggested to me the idea of going to Valparaiso.

Inured as I was to fatigues and privations, feeling myself still able to struggle with new perils, I ventured without hesitation to set forth, with hardly enough clothes to cover

me, almost shoeless and without arms, into the defile of the Andes leading to Chili. My only baggage consisted of a stock of bread.

Chilène, who had already given me so many proofs of devotion, became once more my road-companion. Followed by this good dog, I passed silently through Mendoza, casting to the right and left a look of eternal farewell, while scrupulously fixing in my memory the most enchanting objects of that superb city. I then took my way along the Alamèda in the shade of its quadruple rank of poplars, and finally along the road to Uspailate, which passes through a superb country.

On either side of the road magnificent vines displayed to my admiring eyes enormous bunches of the finest grapes; fruit-trees of all kinds grew in abundance amidst waving corn, and adorned the gardens in

which European and exotic flowers were skilfully blended.

Contemplating this luxurious picture, in which Nature displayed all her riches, I advanced but slowly on my way, plunged, without knowing it, in a dream of admiration that almost made me forget my past sufferings.

At the end of about two leagues, the artificial canals not extending further, fertility suddenly ceased. For the next ten leagues of my way towards the mountains I traversed a sandy plain, completely scorched up and unwatered, where only at intervals I met with a few bushes withered by the sun.

Throughout this part of the journey, made in the midst of the greatest heat and without rest, I and my dog suffered much from thirst. I had brought with me a *haspa* (ox-horn), filled with water, but between us we had emptied it in the course of a few hours. Chilène lolled his tongue out horribly, and

looked up piteously at me as he lifted his paws, aching from the incredible heat of the fine sand over which we had been passing since the morning. After many turnings, we reached the first ravine of the Cordilleras, which concealed a small stream of water quickly discovered by Chilène, and into which he did not hesitate to enter, for the purpose of refreshing himself outwardly as well as inwardly. I followed his example, and then sought for a favourable spot in which to pass the night. Once settled, I broke off a piece of bread, which we two ate together joyously.

However, this first meal in company with my dog inspired me with more prudence in those which succeeded; for the rascal, unused to feeding in such a manner, found it so much to his liking that he quickly helped himself to the remains of my share, which I had unsuspectingly put down by my side. I rested, but it was impossible for me to close

an eye, oppressed as I was by a thousand thoughts and by the icy coldness of the night.

The next day I entered a narrow path between two precipices, leading to the Posta of Villa Vicencia, where I was fortunate enough to get some milk to drink and some boiled meat. I noticed that my dog's appetite was not very great, and as I had remarked that he limped, I began to feel uneasy as to his health.

After examining his paws, from which I extracted several sharp and long thorns, I greased them for him and bound them up carefully in pieces of rag, which he had sufficient instinct and patience to keep on. A great part of the day that followed was devoted to the rest that was so necessary to us both. The Posta of Villa Vicencia was then a spacious and convenient habitation, where travellers preparing to cross the Cordilleras could, without difficulty,

complete or renew their provisions; those coming from Chili, and whom the ten or twelve days' march had exhausted, could also recruit themselves and restore the strength of their mules before going on to Mendoza; I was therefore able to procure food for myself and to nurse my unfortunate dog.

The proprietors of this establishment, where, the season being not yet sufficiently propitious, I met with no other travellers, were most obliging and hospitable in their treatment of me. They were greatly surprised to see me undertaking, alone and on foot, a journey so perilous as that of crossing the Andes. The distressing condition in which I evidently was, piqued their curiosity, at the same time that it moved me to pour out my heart to them.

In answer to their questions, and hardly aware of what I was doing, I drew an almost complete picture of my misfortunes.

One confidence leading to another, they gradually came to know that I had in my purse but five piastres and four reals (about twenty-seven francs), and they refused to receive the least remuneration for their good offices; they even forced me to accept some provisions to help me on my way to the Uspailate. I learned from them that I was close to the thermal springs of Villa Vicencia, well known to, and highly esteemed by, South Americans, for their great efficacy in rheumatic affections, and to which every year a large number of visitors of both sexes resort. In spite of the earnest desire I felt to visit them, I gave up the idea, for Chilène, fatigued and suffering as he was, would probably have insisted on accompanying me, and I preferred his profiting by the rest I had determined he should take.

At the end of two days, his condition having sensibly improved, I took leave of my excellent hosts, expressing to them, as

warmly as I could, my deep gratitude. Their delicacy, however, was so great that they would listen to no thanks, hurriedly giving me directions as to the road I had to follow before reaching Uspallate. On parting with them I began to mount the steep road which leads to Paramillo and to one of the numerous turnings of this difficult road. On my way I saw the Serro Dorado—gilded mountain—so called on account of the golden hue given to it by an innumerable quantity of small yellow plants, with which it is covered from the base to the summit.

Chilène closely followed me somehow all the day, which was unfortunately very fatiguing for both of us. After a very difficult and almost continual ascent, we at length reached the picturesque and striking crest of the Paramillo, at once surrounded and overtopped on all sides by immeasurable rocky peaks, full of fissures, and on most of which were immense loose blocks loosely balanced,

threatening to crush the traveller should they fall.

Too quickly overtaken by the darkness of night, it was impossible for me to venture further. I took up my quarters, therefore, by the side of a small stream, which had served to guide me since my departure from Villa Vicencia, and the source of which was in this locality.

I had spread my poncho, on which I was preparing to sleep, when, with extreme surprise, I saw a feeble and flickering light, which at first I could have sworn came from the bosom of a neighbouring mountain. Incited by curiosity, and guided by the light, I went forward towards it. What was my astonishment to find, in a spot so deserted and arid, two rude huts, constructed of fragments of rock piled one upon another, and covered only with branches quite insufficient to ward off the enormous stones which the winds de-

tached and brought down in a continual shower.

One, the smaller of the two, was not more than two metres square. It was inhabited by a whole family, consisting of the father, a working miner, a man already in the decline of life; of his wife, younger than himself by at least fifteen years; and lastly, of two children, one about seven or eight years old, the other only two or three, both born on the spot, where, in spite of the dreariness of the place, and the incessant dangers by which these worthy people were surrounded, they led a tranquil life. I easily obtained from this poor man, the proprietor of the two huts, permission to pass the night in the one he was not inhabiting, and which he told me, with touching simplicity, he had built entirely for the use of travellers, from whom, in spite of his poverty, he would accept nothing but thanks. On entering this cabin, several bats, frightened by my sudden appear-

ance, and that of Chilène, darted out, striking me in the face as they flew away, but they soon returned to share my shelter from the intensity of the cold. Though stretched upon the bare ground, I, as well as my dog, passed an excellent night.

When I quitted this hospitable place, I returned thanks to the kind-hearted man, who, although his own lot was so hard a one, still sought to be of service to his fellow-creatures.

Before crossing the Paramillo, the last point from which a complete view can be obtained of the space between it and Mendoza, I could not resist the desire to contemplate once more the varied aspect of that beautiful province, with which so many of my remembrances were linked. After addressing to it one of those mental farewells which are never effaced from the memory, I pushed forward with quickened pace along a steep and winding road that ends at Uspailate, the last Mendozian establishment, and

the last trace of civilization. From that point, during eight or ten days, travellers see nothing but the sky—now cloudy, now intensely blue—mountains, and terrible abysses.

Chilène, already greatly fatigued on the previous day, suffered more than ever, for we were without water during the whole of the day; his paws became so swollen and painful, that, being unable any longer to bear the rags in which I had bound them up, he tore them off in a sort of fury. It was with the greatest difficulty that he followed me to Uspailate. I dreaded being obliged to separate myself from this faithful companion, whose company had so often cheered the long hours of my dreary slavery. My distress was the greater because, by abandoning him, I exposed him to die of hunger, or to be devoured by wild beasts. If I had not myself been so exhausted, I should have tried to carry him now and then; but having

lifted him, I felt how completely impossible was the accomplishment of my desire.

“Poor Chilène !” I thought, “will this be the reward of all your devotion,—you who have given me such proofs of it as few men would have been capable of giving, and who, in spite of all your sufferings, doubly exert yourself to accompany me on this painful journey ?”

The heat was overpowering; no spring to refresh us; nothing to be seen but unfortunate horses and mules abandoned in the most piteous condition; some lame, others half raw, and dying of hunger and thirst; principally of thirst, for these poor animals are so accustomed to be without food in the Cordilleras, as to content themselves, for the most part of the time, with eating one another's dung. Everywhere about them lay an incredible number of skeletons of animals of the same race, some retaining their skins, others totally flayed, their sad remains crying

aloud to the poor starving creatures of the fate that awaited them.

Arrived at a wide open space, where the road from San Juan joins that from Mendoza, our march became still more difficult. The soil of this plateau, surrounded by rifted mountains of various colours, was composed of a thick burning dust, sometimes red, sometimes yellow or green, formed of the *débris* of the encircling rocks, on which the sun produced a curious and magnificent effect, but into which I sank up to my knees.

Dying with hunger and want, I was fortunate enough to be received at the post-house of Uspallate by excellent people, perfectly willing to procure for me everything in their power. I made a hearty meal, as did my poor Chilène, whose sufferings were the subject of a long conversation, in which I related how I had attached him to me among the Indians, and with what faith-

fulness he had since followed me. These worthy people, understanding the distress I felt at the impossibility of his accompanying me to the end of my journey, and touched by my regrets as well as by the sad condition of my poor companion, offered to keep him. I gladly accepted this offer. It was not without sorrow, however, that I left him the next morning, never expecting to see him again.

Before reaching the first mountains, which had appeared to me to be a very little distance off, I traversed for five or six hours a plain as bare as that on the other side of Uspailate. I then crossed two rapid torrents; following the winding bank of the second, I found myself positively climbing the Cordilleras.

I could no longer see any trace of verdure, for I found myself surrounded by nothing but rocks, between which, at rare intervals only, I perceived a few stunted shrubs, giving

a complete idea of the arid nature of the soil, and of the severity of the seasons. Notwithstanding the numerous difficulties of the road, strewn for the greater part of the way with stones which wrung and fatigued my feet horribly, and the state of melancholy in which I was plunged, I could not help often admiring the strange effect of all these mountains ranged one above the other, and infinitely varied in aspect, their summits hidden in the clouds. The stunning roar of a rushing torrent, into which, to an immense depth, rolled monstrous blocks of rock, and the violent whistling of the wind, repeated in sighs by the distant echoes, were the only sounds to be heard in that wild solitude.

After having pushed forward all day, almost without stopping, I retired at nightfall into a cleft in the rock, which served me for a bed. In the midst of the imposing and icy solitude by which I was surrounded, a thousand thoughts assailed me, taking the

form of feverish dreams. I had awoke long before daylight, tormented by the cutting coldness of the air, against which my only protection were a thin cotton poncho, a pair of canvas trousers, and a shirt partly worn out,—my sole articles of dress. Not being able, before daybreak, to continue my journey on that perilous road, to shorten the time I satisfied the craving of my stomach with some dry bread, which I felt inclined to moisten with my tears, on thinking of my absent faithful dog, to whose company and caresses I had become so used, that my eyes constantly turned in search of him in the darkness.

What then was my surprise, my delight, and my admiration, when, at the first faint tinge of light, at the moment I was preparing to start, I perceived my poor Chilène hobbling towards me!

In spite of the necessity for continuing my journey diligently, I could not refuse to

give him some rest, of which he at once took advantage. But the lively satisfaction which the sight of him had given me was immediately succeeded by keen regret, persuaded as I was that the poor brute would not be able to continue the journey.

For a moment the idea crossed my mind of taking him back to Uspailate, but I was already greatly fatigued by the preceding days; and besides, the moments were becoming so precious, that the loss of a day might have exposed me to be overtaken by bad weather, and to perish in the Cordilleras.

I was compelled, therefore, to pursue my way along the narrow and tortuous path cut in the peaked mountain-side, sometimes passing over them almost at a right angle, at others descending them by steep inclines, having on my right their rocky flanks, and on my left a yawning precipice, at the foot of which bounded a noisy and

frothing torrent, into which a false step, or the least giddiness, might have precipitated me.

At every step the number of dead mules, with which the road from Mendoza to Aconcagua is strewn, appeared to increase. In several places I saw on the abrupt slopes of the mountain, the remains of boxes of linen and of clothes, together with skeletons of mules stopped in their descent by the jutting rocks.

More than anywhere, it is in proximity with *del ladèra de las vacas* that are found the tell-tale remains of these terrible dramas of the Cordilleras.

At this point the mountain rises almost perpendicularly, while on the other side it descends sheer down to the rapid torrent that flows at its base. It was with the greatest difficulty imaginable I climbed and descended this dreaded path, and I could not help sincerely pitying the mules which, laden to

the utmost, are called upon to pass over it, after having already endured days of privation and fatigue.

Further on I reached a *casucha* in which I passed the night. There also I saw an incredible number of scattered bones, proving, no doubt, that some entire troop had fallen victims to a storm, as often happens.

I found myself in the most piteous condition, and at the end of my provisions. I had not yet met with any muleteers, and I was almost despairing of getting food, when at length I saw a troop of mules encamped at the foot of the Cambre. I hastened to the *arrieros*, who gave me a hearty welcome, invited me to take some South American tea, and to dine with them. I accepted with the greater delight that my own small store of provisions had only enabled me to take off the edge of my appetite, sharpened as it was by the keen mountain air. I seated myself beside the leader of the troop,

near a good fire, before which was boiling the *casuèla*—the South American *pot au feu*, or stew of meat and vegetables—and over which were roasting some *schurascos*, strips of dried meat, or kind of beef-steak in use amongst the Argentines. During dinner the youngest of the troop, by turns, watched the mules scattered about on the crests of the surrounding heights, the only places where they can find anything green. The evening was passed very gaily by us, and everyone showed me all sorts of delicate attentions; each was eager to lend me wherewithal to make up a bed, on which I passed a comfortable night, which, joined with the copious meal I had made, gave me the strength I so much required to continue my journey.

It was not without difficulty that I left these excellent people, who were still further kind enough to make me accept some provisions.

As we were going in opposite directions,

I took my way alone, thinking of my poor Chilène, whose sufferings had at last completely disabled him from following me, and whom I had been unhappily compelled to leave in a dying state some leagues behind.

To cross the Cambre, at the foot of which I arrived in the afternoon, I had to crawl—that is the word—for more than an hour and a half along a winding narrow path, formed in the side of the mountain at an angle of forty-five degrees ; struggling against a violent wind that frequently forced me to go on my hands and knees, to prevent myself being hurled from the top to the bottom.

When I had reached the summit of the Andes, the nipping cold forbade my making so long a halt as I could have desired at the foot of a wooden cross erected at that spot, to mark the separation between Chili and the Argentine Republic. I descended, not without great difficulty, about the space of half a league along a steep path bordered by

the eternal snows, which led me to a narrow shallow stream running noisily amid gigantic masses of rocks, fallen from the peaks of the Andes, and strangely heaped together.

After having followed for more than two hours descents so steep that it appeared impossible for either men or animals to make their way down them, I at length found myself out of the icy region. The mountains then appeared to me to wear a less sombre aspect. In different places I came upon some very green algarrobas, under the shade of which I rested pleasantly. The transition of climate seemed to me so wonderful, that I could have believed myself to be dreaming.

Going further on, I thought myself really transported into an enchanted country. Nature was green and smiling about me. Some fields, and most of the hill-sides, were sown with corn and planted with fruit-trees, while a well-kept road announced the neigh-

bourhood of a considerable population. The delight and admiration of these marvels made me forget my fatigue and the weariness of the road. But I was completely exhausted when I reached the *guardia*, a house of the same kind as that at Uspailate, where I could rest myself and refresh myself with a little roasted meat and wine; the latter, of which I had been so long deprived, produced on me the effect of an opiate, and threw me into a profound sleep. It was the first time I had slept in a bed since my departure from Rio Quinto; and, very far as it was from deserving its name, I passed in it a most delicious night.

On awaking next day, I continued my journey, excusably impatient to reach as quickly as I could Aconcagua, the first Chilian town, which all my fatigues and horrible sufferings made me regard as a veritable safety-plank—as the road to my dear country.

It was still a long way from the guardia to Aconcagua, but the road, long as it was, was very different to that which had preceded it: the country was infinitely more animated; magnificent flocks scattered here and there, were cropping a juicy clover that reminded me of the fields of our fair France. Along the sides of the road stood a large number of *ranchos* of mean appearance but surrounded with charming little gardens, the sight of which cheered my spirit. In many of these slightly-built residences which I had occasion to enter, either to seek food or shelter for a few hours from the burning heat of the sun, I was agreeably surprised to see what order and cleanliness everywhere reigned. In each of these poor houses I saw beautiful children, who appeared to be objects of the most tender solicitude; the sole luxury of their parents seemed to be the dress of these delightful little creatures, whose bright open faces so strongly contrasted with the hideous features

of the young Indians I had so long had under my eyes.

All these worthy people, on seeing my state of thinness and poverty, could not help exhibiting surprise, which increased as I answered their good-natured questions. They were particularly astonished on learning that I had dared to effect alone the passage of the Andes, without a guide, and, so to speak, without food; above all, after having previously endured the privations to which my journey in the same manner, from Rio Quinto to Mendoza, had exposed me. During my first journey, however, it had been possible for me to hunt, though with a thousand precautions against discovery by the Indians. When I described to them my horrible slavery, and the frightful tyranny of which I had been the object for several years, they showed the deepest sympathy with my trials, and questioned me as to my projects, generously offering me an asylum among them-

selves, or to procure me the means of furnishing my wants. Some believing me to be an artisan, suggested my finding employment on a farm, or in one of the numerous copper foundries in the neighbourhood. But I was in haste to reach Aconcagua. I expressed my warm gratitude to them, at the same time excusing myself on the ground of the impatience I felt concerning my family, for news of whom I had so long been pining.

They, nevertheless, wished me to spend a few days with them, with the view of resting myself before proceeding on my journey; but my eagerness to reach the end I proposed to myself forbad my accepting their pressing invitation. Seeing that my mind was made up to depart, they loaded me with excellent provisions, which, I confess, rather flattered my taste, so long unused to good things.

During the whole course of this journey I met with nothing but kind consideration and attention, for I had hardly left one house

before the not less friendly inhabitants of another compelled me afresh to accept their warm invitations which, though they materially retarded my progress, could not be otherwise than agreeable to me, and were morally invigorating.

At last, after many of these refreshing halts, I arrived at Aconcagua ; I was in Chili.

While taking rest, I formed a thousand projects which circumstances alone could help me to realize. I hesitated between Santiago and Valparaiso. Providence, which had so much favoured me during my flight and my two dreary and perilous journeys, inspired me with the choice of Valparaiso. I employed the chief part of my five piastres in paying my expenses, and the remainder in procuring provisions. Unfortunately, I was not able to buy enough to last me to the end of the journey, for everything was very dear ; so that when I reached Quillotte I was exhausted by fatigue and want.

Happily, the first person I met was a Frenchman occupied in giving orders on the railway works of Santiago. I went up to him, and addressing him in French, begged him instantly to be good enough to give me employment, but, I must add, that I besought him first of all to give me some food, as I was dying of hunger. This excellent man, affected by my wretchedness and sickly condition, hastened to satisfy my wishes. He took me with him to his hotel, and made me share his repast.

My answers to his questions led him to guess that I had not been used to manual labour. He judged also by the raggedness of my dress that I must have suffered great reverses to have been reduced to the sad state in which he saw me. He employed all means to stimulate my confidence ; his frankness and air of perfect kindness won upon me to open my heart. I, therefore, related to him, in all its details, my sad story, from

my departure from France to the moment of my meeting with him.

His emotion was great during my recital, and often tears, stealing furtively from his eyelids, betrayed the tenderness of his heart. Sometimes, at the most moving passages of my story, his hand sought mine, and I could not decline to accept these marks of sympathy, for I felt that I had found in him a friend capable of consoling and aiding me to struggle victoriously with the frightful destiny by which I was pursued.

Monsieur Barthès—such was the name of my protector—had promised to employ me, and when we left the hotel I insisted on immediately entering upon my functions. He tried to oppose this, on account of my state of extreme fatigue and weakness; but I persisted and obtained my wish, for I desired at least to earn the excellent dinner of which I had partaken. He presented me to his *peons* as a new companion. In this way I became

a mason, much against the wishes of dear Monsieur Barthès, who, being convinced that I had never followed such a trade, felt a decided repugnance to my decision.

For several days I found this hard work very fatiguing, but, with courage, I succeeded sufficiently well to satisfy my conscience that I had earned my wages. At times, however, when I had to do as the others did, move large blocks of granite, my strength seemed to desert me, and the result of the efforts I made was that I fainted, which always drew from my kind fellow-countryman expressions of the greatest solicitude, and friendly reproaches for what he called my obstinate persistence and unreasonableness.

This worthy man was untiring in his endeavours to get me more fitting employment elsewhere. He made incessant applications in my behalf, taking the greatest care to hide them from me, so as not to buoy me up with false hopes. He alleviated my fate

by all imaginable means; he made me take my meals with him, and shared his bed-room with me. Out of working hours, he would not allow me to leave him any more than his own shadow; he presented me to his friends, by whom, owing to the high esteem in which he was held, I was generally very well received. The delicate goodness of this gentleman went so far as to make him anticipate the least want I could have, and inspired him with all imaginable means for affording me entertainment and distraction. Dreading to leave me alone on Sundays when he went to Valparaiso, where he had a house, he never went away without giving orders to the hotel-keeper to treat me well during his absence, and to give me the pleasure of his company—for this man was almost a copy of my friend in the interest he took in me.

On Sunday evening or Monday morning, when my friend returned to his occupations,

he always brought with him some provisions, in the shape of dainties of all kinds, and some books, the reading of which gave me great pleasure. As modest as he was good, my protector, having observed that I possessed some education, took pleasure in carrying on long conversations with me on agreeable subjects, which amused our leisure moments.

Under the influence of so many attentions and so much kindness, my mind recovered itself, the veil of my dreary thoughts was each day raised a little more, and the sun of hope threw a beneficent ray upon my sick brain. My charitable friend, knowing what pleasure it was to me to speak of my family or to hear it spoken of, conversed with me frequently on the subject. In order to make sure of their reaching their destination, he took charge of some letters which I addressed to France.

A month had passed since I had gained the friendship of this estimable man, when he

suddenly raised me from a common labourer to a foreman, and increased my wages, which he considered too small for the services I was rendering.

I was thus enabled to think a little of my clothing, and, when the works at the station of Quillotte were finished, I had the good fortune to be able to purchase some linen, a good poncho, and a pair of trousers. To describe the pleasure I felt at seeing myself so dressed would be impossible. It seemed to me that I must appear a tolerably good-looking person. I gradually encouraged myself to take pleasure in walking about the streets of the town, which I did not yet know, though I had lived in it for more than three months.

However, in spite of this wonderful change in my existence, my health was very much shattered, my nights were mostly restless and agitated by nightmares, which often disturbed the sleep of Monsieur Barthès, and made him

very anxious on my account. When I was awake even, I could not shake off the distressing effects which any kind of surprise had upon me. The sudden appearance of any one, or the unexpected sound of voices, shook my nerves and brought on a sort of convulsive trembling. My sudden change of food, instead of mitigating my liability to these attacks, seemed rather to augment it, which greatly distressed Monsieur Barthès, whom circumstances were about to separate from me, for some time at least; for having nothing more to do at Quillotte, he was about to return to the bosom of his family. He proposed to take me with him; but understanding, from the manner of my refusal, that delicacy alone compelled me to decline his obliging offer, he did not venture to insist; but he made applications in my favour which, thank God, were successful even beyond his hopes. He came, deeply moved and joyful, to announce to me the good news.

He had obtained for me the situation of machinist in the establishment of one of the richest men in the country, who was in want of somebody to oversee and direct the gathering of his immense crops, which he intended to reap entirely by machinery.

I was obliged to submit to a change of residence, and to leave Quillotte, where I had already made several pleasant acquaintances, with whom I spent my leisure hours ; the effect of society had been to soothe in some measure my agitated mind, and had consequently produced some amelioration of the state of my health.

I set off in company with my new patron for one of his farms, called Las Massas, distant about a dozen leagues from Quillotte. I thus found myself going back towards the road I had followed on my arrival, but by a different and more picturesque route.

On reaching our destination, Don Césario, my patron, after presenting me to his family,

conducted me to the immense field of labour he was about to entrust to me. He left me the duty of pointing out the most convenient spots for the placing of the machines, as well as the site on which I should wish to have a *rancho* built, as I was to live here, in order to exercise continual watchfulness.

I had engaged to direct the work, but not to set up the machines, which task I found myself expected to perform, however, to my great regret, fearing I should not be able to manage this difficult operation ; but being unable to find anybody in the country capable of doing the work, I was obliged to make up my mind to attempt it myself. I was fortunate enough to succeed beyond my hopes. Besides this labour, which was not at all in my department, I had to break in horses and oxen to work the threshing and winnowing machines, which in these countries can only be moved by the help of animals.

Several days passed in this difficult as well as disagreeable occupation, the first result of which was to occasion several damages which I myself had to repair.

At length I entered upon the functions for which I had been engaged—functions still more difficult. I found myself surrounded by some sixty very rough peasants, most of them highly insubordinate. At the first orders I gave, or the first remark I made to them, they broke into open rebellion and threatened me. Very fortunately for myself, I had long been used to danger, and my firmness abashed most of them; as to the others, I sent them about their business, after having reported their conduct to Don César. As a measure of precaution, and thoroughly knowing the treacherous and vindictive character of these beings of pure Indian race, I borrowed pistols of my patron. It was well I did this; for the expelled mutineers had the effrontery to return and

endeavour to induce the others to rise against me, against the *gavacho*—the stranger, the nobody. Judging from the bearing of my workmen that they would very quickly allow themselves to be drawn on if I showed any weakness, I confronted the mutineers, and commanded them instantly to take themselves off. One of them, more daring than his companions, having raised his hand to strike me, I at once let them see my pistols, declaring I would fire on the first who advanced a step further. The sight of my weapons, which they had not suspected to be in my possession, though they were not loaded, made them as cowardly as they had been arrogant. They went away crest-fallen, convinced that the *gavacho* was not a man to let himself be intimidated by people of their sort.

However, this kind of triumph, though it gained me thenceforth the consideration of the most reasonable, disgusted and annoyed me extremely. I therefore wrote to Don

Césario, who was a magistrate, that if he did not find means to prevent these outbreaks, I should abandon the works he had put under my charge, at the risk, to him, of losing his harvest. He hastened to consult with me on the measures to be taken. We collected the peons, to whom he himself handed their pay. Those whom I pointed out as having taken part in the cabal, he instantly sent away, and threatened them with imprisonment, in the event of their repeating their misconduct. To the others he announced that he gave me full powers of command over them, to turn them away, or to have them incarcerated in case of need. From that moment none of them gave me cause for complaint.

But, in the end, I owed little to Don Césario, who, after having promised me a fitting salary, thought proper to reduce it considerably. Being a foreigner, and having nobody to see that justice was done me, I

was obliged to resign myself to the loss of a sum well earned, and which would have been a great help to me. I remained, however, some time still at the farm of Las Massas, being without the means of reaching Quillotte, for Don César, nettled at my having reproached him for his bad faith, refused me the means of returning. However, after a few days, he saw that his obstinacy would cost him at least my board and lodging, and lent me a horse.

I departed, not knowing what was to become of me, without asylum, and almost without money, but with a heart rendered light by the breaking off of all intercourse with Don César, against whom I had great cause of complaint. I should not have remained so long as I did, but out of consideration for his brother, Don Matys-Ovaillo, who had shown me the greatest kindness, and to whom I felt deeply grateful.

On returning to Quillotte, I revisited most

of the acquaintances I had made there ; they received me with open arms, and wished me to stay with them for a few days. Monsieur Barthès, having been informed of my troubles, wrote to urge me to go as quickly as possible to Valparaiso, where he hoped, he said, to find me some settled employment. I was, therefore, compelled to decline all the invitations so pressingly made to me. Fortunately I had one piastre left, which served to pay for my journey of twenty-five leagues by railway. Two hours sufficed to carry me from Quillotte to Valparaiso, where I arrived, after having coasted the sea for more than a league.

At the station I soon saw Monsieur Barthès, from whom I had been separated for more than three months. Great was my joy at again meeting this worthy and respectable friend, who received me with open arms. His wife, his son Paul, who was nearly of my own age, and his daughter, who were also

very anxious to make my acquaintance, had taken the trouble to come with him, and gave me a most affecting welcome. We all went together to their house, situated on the heights overlooking the port, which we reached by mounting the Quèbrada de l'Almendral (Almond-tree Hollow).

My friend sent me up at once with his son Paul, who conducted me to his room, and there, in spite of all objection, made me dress myself in some of his clothes. I was deeply affected at this evidence of friendliness and consideration, but truly uncomfortable in the elegant costume I had put on ; for, since my departure from Buenos Ayres, I had lost the habit of dress. When I went down again, and saw by one of the glasses in the drawing-room my sudden transformation, instead of being satisfied with it, I felt almost shocked, for, in spite of myself, a world of sad remembrances rushed back upon my mind.

The kind attentions and solicitude of the

Barthès' family happily triumphed over my melancholy, which, however, sometimes returned upon me when we were at table. Surrounded by these worthy persons, who so strongly recalled my own parents—frequently hearing them pronounce the name of Paul, which was that of my beloved brother—I could not turn my thoughts from my dear country, and the dear beings I had left there. Towards the end of the repast, however, I made a better figure, for the efforts of my indefatigable friend at last induced me to join in the general gaiety.

The delicacy of my entertainers was pushed to such an extreme, that, in spite of their warm desire to hear from my lips the narrative of my unfortunate adventures, many days passed without their putting the least question to me, for fear of reviving my distress. As these ladies often conversed with me on the subject of my family, I showed them their portraits, and explained

to them the manner in which I had been able to preserve them up to that time. This awakened their curiosity to the highest degree, and afforded me an opportunity to relate to them the story of my captivity.

Happy as I was to find myself made as much of as in my own family, it nevertheless cost me a good deal to remain inactive during the three days I had to wait for the employment which Monsieur Barthès had led me to hope for, but which he had still to seek, for I perceived that this had been part of a delicate scheme to make me accept an asylum in his house. Being unwilling to abuse the extreme kindness of this family, I sought actively for employment. For several days my attempts were fruitless, which considerably increased my lowness of spirits.

Monsieur Barthès and his son, to whom I took care not to communicate the cause of my new anxiety, did everything in the world to entertain me. After much pressing, they

persuaded me to go with them to the theatre ; it was the first time I had been there since my departure from France ; but though the house was splendid, and the "Diamants de la Couronne" was being performed, my thoughts were elsewhere. When the first act was over, my friends took me into the saloon of the theatre, where an aristocratic crowd of all nations was assembled, their elegant dresses adding to the effect of the gorgeous decoration of the room. After having enjoyed the magnificent sight for a few moments, we returned to our seats for the rising of the curtain.

The second act had commenced about a quarter of an hour, when a very animated conversation arose behind us, but having nothing of a hostile character. The words, "It is he! it is he!" frequently repeated by one of my noisy neighbours, having roused me to look round, I was agreeably surprised at recognizing a person I had

known at Mendoza, and whose whole attention, as well as that of his companion, appeared fixed on me. I immediately rose to bow to him, but I was fated to meet with surprise on surprise, for both he and the person next him held out their hands with all sorts of friendly demonstrations, and addressed me by my names. I soon learned the answer to the riddle: this gentleman, who was unknown to me, had arrived at Buenos Ayres some time after me, and, at the instigation of his family, which was acquainted with mine, had made unceasing inquiry concerning me. He had corresponded with my excellent mother, who, six months after my capture by the Indians, had been informed of the fact by the good missionaries, and by a well-known man of learning, Monsieur Bravard, whose love of science brought him to a terrible and premature end. He perished under the ruins of that superb Mendoza, of which he had, a few

days before, only too accurately predicted the destruction.

Monsieur Edmond Carré, such was the name of the charming and obliging fellow-countryman with whom I had the honour next day to become more fully acquainted, had, by an extraordinary presentiment, preserved some of my mother's letters, on the chance of some providential accident bringing us together. My friends, the Barthès, from whom I had received so many marks of sympathy, shared in the joy I felt at this happy meeting, which, doubtless, would not have taken place but for their pressing endeavours to induce me to take a few moments' amusement. I was the more delighted with this unhopèd-for circumstance, that it resulted in a conversation which confirmed the truth of the story of my misfortunes which I had related to the Barthès family.

It was with the assistance of Monsieur

Carré that I got letters from my family, giving me the means of returning to France.

During a stay of several months at Valparaiso, notwithstanding the obliging services of my friends Barthès and Carré, I obtained nothing but such hard work as completely broke down my health. There, while carefully concealing my sad position from my friends, I found myself, as I had done in traversing the Pampas and crossing the Cordilleras, several times reduced to starvation. I was overcome with distress, seeing myself everywhere and always pursued by the same fate; in the midst of civilized beings I was often compelled, when resting from the fatigues of the day, to sleep on a wretched pallet in a roofless garret, exposed to icy winds and torrents of rain, that benumbed my limbs, and revived my sufferings to such a degree that I had the greatest difficulty in the world to bear up against them.

Even these wretched employments several times failed me ; at times I was obliged to put up with two or three mouthfuls of bread a day, and to make my way stealthily into stables where I shared the litter of animals more fortunate than myself, having at least food enough to appease the cravings of their appetite.

Overcome by despair, and growing more and more ill, I resolved, as I had been advised, to call on Monsieur Cazotte, Consul at Valparaiso. This functionary received me in the kindest manner, congratulating me on my fortunate return to liberty. He informed me that he had long before received orders from the Government concerning me, and showed me an enormous bundle of papers, in which were docketed the different articles he had published about me in all the Chilian newspapers, in consequence of the representations of my family, made through Monsieur Limpérani, Consul-general at San-

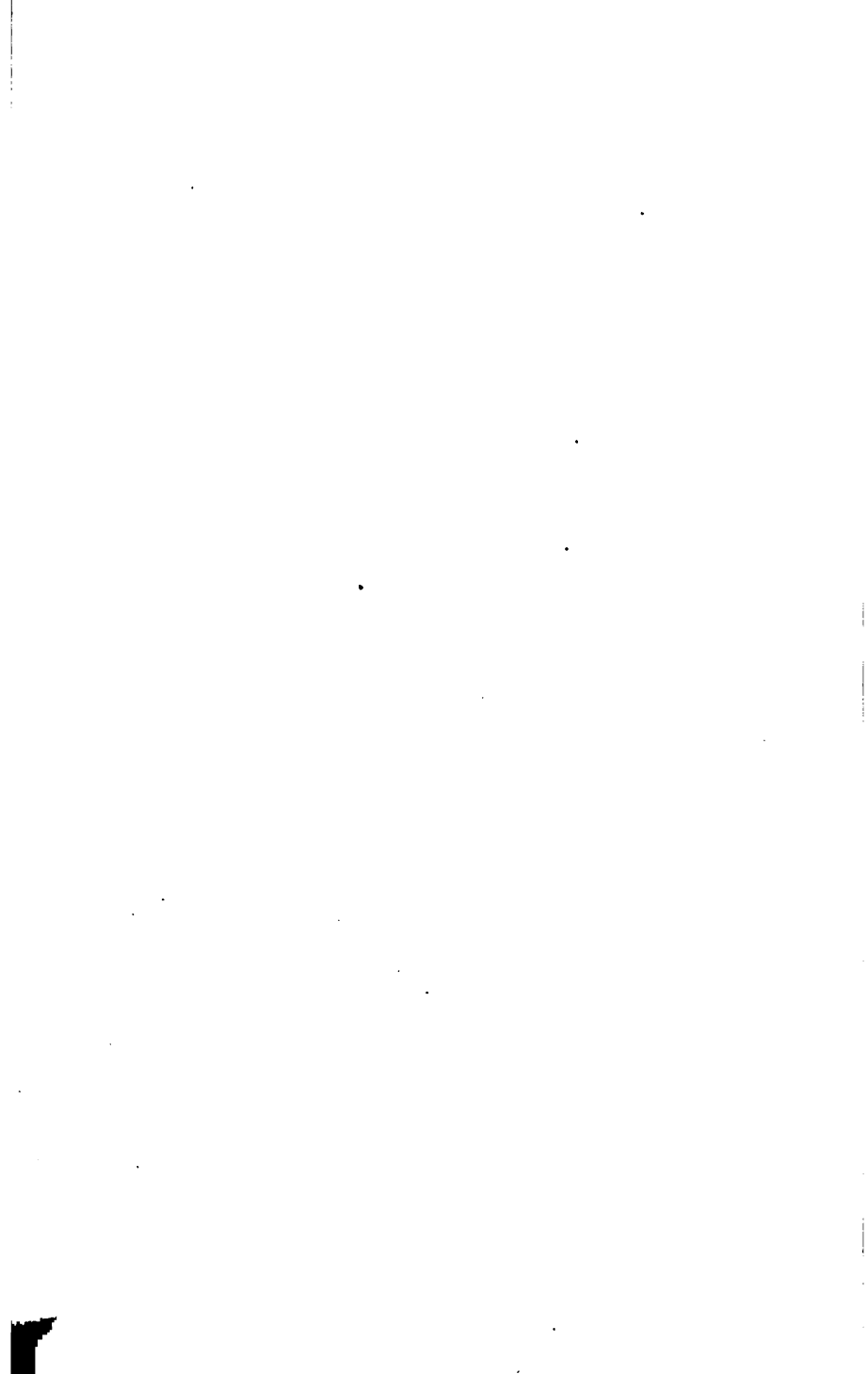
tiago, and through the missionaries. Monsieur Cazotte had the goodness, before embarking me on board the corvette "Constantine," to furnish me with all that was necessary for me on the voyage.

A week after my interview with the consul, the departure of the vessel for France having been irrevocably fixed, I went to my excellent friends, the Barthès', to take my leave and express to them once more my sincere gratitude. It was not without deep emotion that I parted from these good people, of whom the recollection will never be effaced from my memory, any more than that of Monsieur Carré, who exerted himself in my behalf with as warm an interest as if I had been one of his own relatives.

As at Valparaiso, so it was on board the vessel that was bearing me to France, my mind, oppressed by long-continued misery, was absorbed by two conflicting emotions :

the desire to return to France, and to all those whom I loved, and an incessant struggle with the reminiscences of my captivity.

Like Mungo Park, escaped from the tyranny of the Moors of the Great Sahara, I was a long time believing in my deliverance. It was with me as with that great traveller : I needed to cross the ocean, to return to my country, to the restorative calmness of the paternal hearth, to free my sleep from visions, and my brain from phantoms conjured up by the odious remembrance of the brigands of the desert.



NOTES.

NOTE A.—The Viscacha, in Indian *Trouby*, is very common to the south of Buenos Ayres. This animal makes burrows in the earth like the rabbit, with numerous outlets close together, and mostly near roads. It lives in families, and consumes the grass in its neighbourhood. It is not unfrequently met with in gardens, where it causes great havoc, still oftener in sown fields. It only goes about during the twilight, and never far from its burrow. Its length varies from twenty to twenty-five *pouces*, without including the tail; its body is thick-set, head fat and chubby, ear large, eye large, muzzle blunt and shaggy; it has the mouth and teeth of the hare. The fore-quarters are much higher than the hind-quarters. It has long and very stiff bristles in place of moustaches. The flesh of this animal is very white and very tender, but very insipid, yet good eating when well seasoned.

NOTE B.—*Gnay-u d'Azara*: *Cervus compestris* of F. Cuvier. A kind of roebuck, differing from the European species by its white throat.

NOTE C.—The *céton*, *mamouël céton*, or *careux céton*, is a gigantic kind of thistle, to which the Indians give one or other of these names, according as it is green or dry. Green, they call it *careux céton*; dry, *mamouël céton*.

This thistle, very common in certain parts, where it grows with great rapidity, differs entirely from that which is known in France. It has a round and very upright stem, often attaining a height of over two mètres, the diameter varying from one to two, and even to two and a half *pouces*. It is armed, so to speak, throughout its length with long narrow leaves, forming sharp angles, and bristling with a great quantity of spines. The top of the stem is crowned by a mass of small leaves looking like a ball.

The Indians are generally very fond of this plant, which, when quite young, is of great service in the preparation of certain dishes, such as: 1st. *Tchaffis-céton*, a mixture of milk and small pieces of the stem of this thistle, which they allow to ferment, and on which they regale themselves as often as possible; 2nd. *Hilo-céton*, thistle baked in the ashes and always mixed with raw or half-cooked meat.

They eat it also in an uncooked state, and I have sometimes feasted on it raw; for in its natural condition I found it very like celery.

When dry, this gigantic thistle, the stem of which becomes hollow and very hard, serves the Indians of the plain for wood (*mamouël*); during three quarters of the year no other combustible being at their disposal, besides *mey-vacas*, or *mey-potro*, the dried dung of oxen or horses, or *Foros* and *yiçouine*, that is to say, bones and fat.

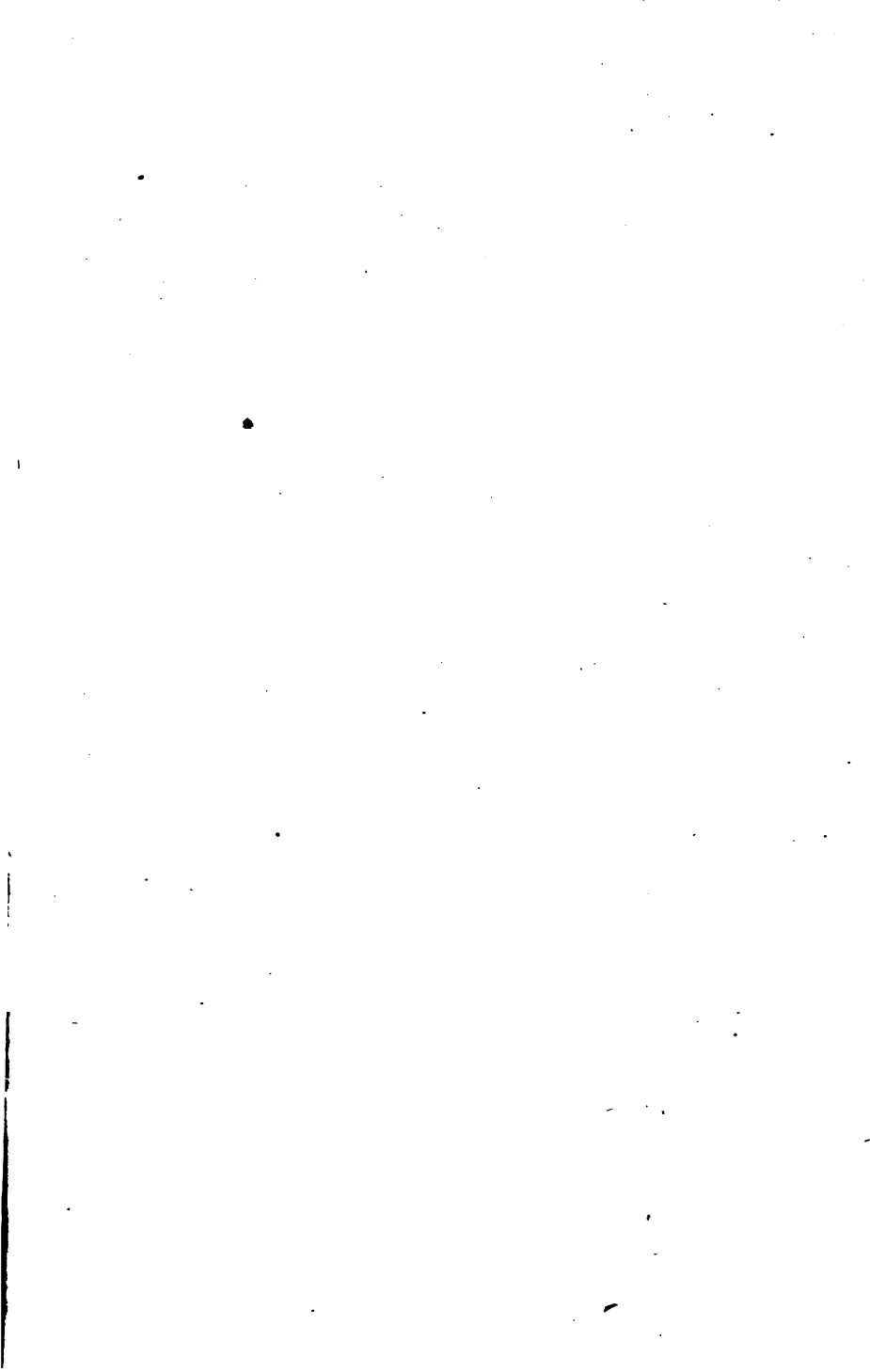
NOTE D.—Monsieur Guinnard's words are: "Les unes viennent de la direction ouest-nord-est, les autres de celle

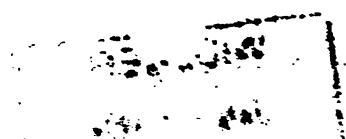
ouest-sud-est, mais ces divers affluents ne viennent grossir le Colorado que beaucoup plus au loin." I confess I do not clearly understand him.—*Trans.*

NOTE E.—I fail to seize the meaning of Monsieur Guinnard's statement: "On trouve toujours ces œufs en très-grand nombre. Les Indiens ne mangent que ceux qui sont en nombre pair, et font fi des autres qu'ils prétendent ne pas être fécondés." One of the strangest habits known of the African ostrich is that of laying on the outside of its nest a number of eggs not intended to be hatched, and which are found fresh, while the eggs within the nest are in an advanced state of incubation: does the *nandou*, the ostrich of Patagonia, act in the same way? and are its superfluous eggs the "odd" ones which the Pampeans treat with such marked contempt?—*Trans.*

THE END.







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